CARDINAL MERCIER'S OWN STORY

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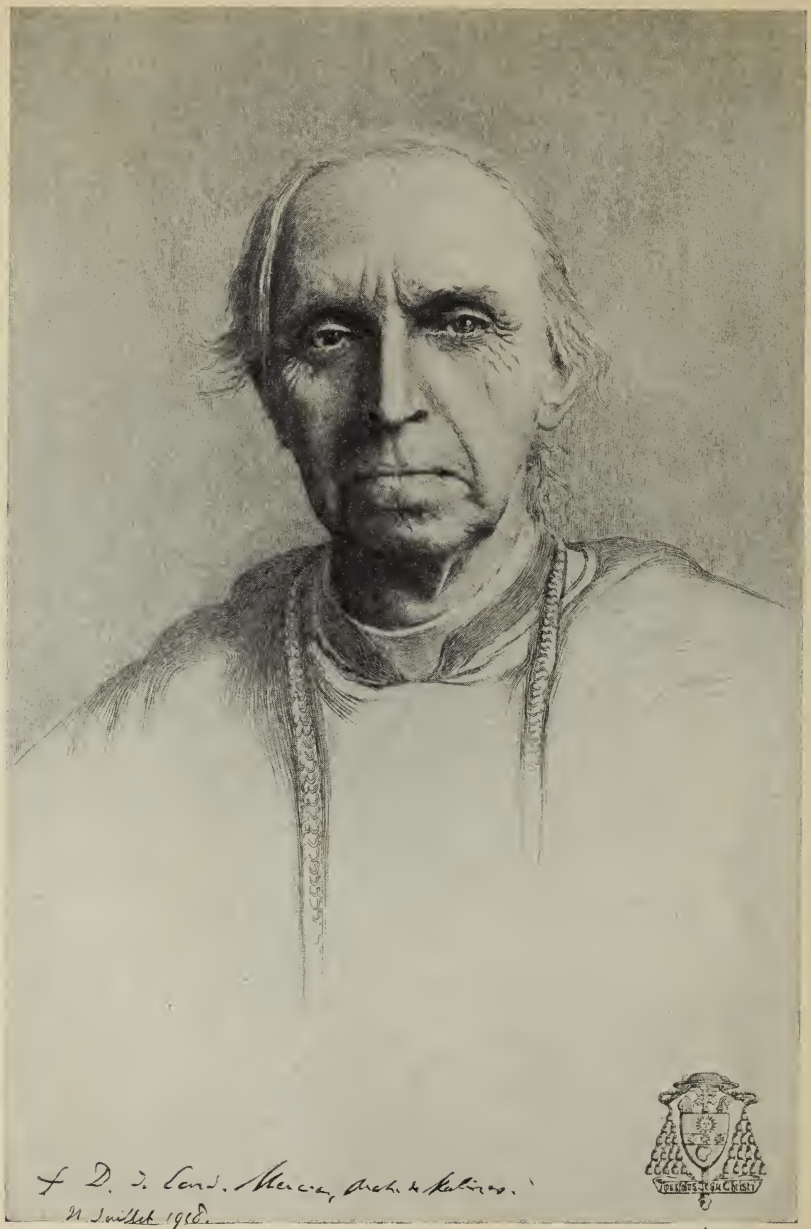
CARDINAL MERCIER'S OWN STORY


† D. J. Card. Mercier, Archev. de Malines.
M. Juillet 1908.
M. PIRON.

CARDINAL MERCIER'S OWN STORY

by

His Eminence, D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER
Archbishop of Malines

INTRODUCTION BY PROFESSOR FERNAND MAYENCE

Prefatory Letter by His Eminence
JAMES CARDINAL GIBBONS

NEW YORK
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I think I owe the public
a word of explanation as to
how this book has seen the
light.

During the War, and more
frequently after the armistice,
I was asked would I write
a narrative of my War experiences.

I had taken many notes of
events as they occurred, and my
memory was full of the incidents

Cardinal's Residence,
408 N. Charles St.
Baltimore.

September 16, 1919.

I am very happy to be able to recommend to the American reading public this authorized, official and authentic story of my beloved and esteemed brother, Cardinal Mercier's experience during the Great War.

In it the reader will realize the full meaning of the Cardinal's attitude during the war, and possess a true historical account of the great moral fight which was carried on by him as Belgium's spiritual leader.

J. Card. Gibbons

PREFACE

By Professor Fernand Mayence,
of Louvain University, Louvain, Belgium

FROM all parts of the world, but especially from America, His Eminence Cardinal Mercier was requested to write his experiences during the German occupation of Belgium.

The magnificent rôle which he had played during the war was universally known. His pastoral letters with which he confronted the power in occupation and in which he publicly proclaimed the rights of truth and justice had been read in every corner of the world. Some of the powerful letters addressed by him to the German Governor General as a protest against the odious régime imposed upon Belgium had already been published even during the occupation. The knowledge of certain episodes of the duel which had been going on between the Cardinal and the German Governor General roused a good deal of curiosity.

What people wanted was to have in detail from him who had been during the occupation of Belgium the "soul of resistance" all the varying phases of the conflict which, without a moment's respite or any signs of wavering, he waged against the tyranny of the oppressor.

The many and unceasing labors of his episcopal office hindered the Cardinal from yielding to these pressing requests; but his experiences, had they not already been embodied during the war in the voluminous correspondence he had exchanged with the representatives of the Imperial Government?

To satisfy those who wanted a book on his encounters with the Germans, the Cardinal consented to the publication of these documents and conferred upon us a great honor in choosing us to edit them.

During the occupation, certain portions of the archiepiscopal archives—among other the Cardinal's correspondence with the German Governor General—underwent the fate of all the "verboten." To avoid perquisitions and to guard against their being seized, they had to be hidden away in dark corners which, today appearing to afford security, tomorrow ceasing to do so, eventually were in all haste changed for others.

Unfortunately, in the course of these repeated and hurried removals from one place to another, some of the documents—happily of small importance, so it seems—went astray. We have called attention to these lacunæ in the course of our work each time that we were able to certify the fact.

We have here reproduced all the documents that have been preserved. We have only left out a few letters of little importance, as, for instance, the sending of a passport to travel by motor or those only containing requests in favor of political prisoners, and for that reason presenting no point of general interest.

In the arrangement of the documents the method adopted is not a strictly chronological one. At the risk of not respecting the order in which they were written we thought it useful, at the same time as we have endeavored to follow as closely as possible the sequence of events, to group the letters according to the principal objects for which they were written.

Cardinal Mercier's correspondence with the German Governor General is, in brief, an exposé of the hateful régime to which Belgium was subjected during the fifty long months of the German domination. There is, in fact, not a single crime of the occupying power which this courageous pastor has not stigmatized, not a single one of its snares which he has not exposed, not a single one of its hypocritical acts which he has not laid bare, not one single act of abuse of its governing power against which he has not raised his voice in angry protest.

Scorning all danger,* listening only to the voice of his conscience, he constantly kept to the fore against the abuse of "might," the imprescribable rights of truth and justice. By his uniform behavior, by the calmness and nobleness of his attitude, whether in the face of threats or of conciliatory proposals of the occupying power, he upset the calculations of a government which labored under the conviction that a systematic organization placed at the service of "might" ought eventually to triumph over all resistance.

From the time he took office as Governor General, Baron von Bissing, using the Cardinal of Cologne as an intermediary, endeavored to enter into personal relations with the primate of Belgium. He gave him to understand that he was disposed to give entire satisfaction to the Catholic Church and to assuage the wounds already inflicted on the occupied country by the war.

In his first letter to Baron von Bissing, while thanking him in a very courteous manner for the good feelings shown by him, His Eminence made a point of clearing away from the beginning any possible misunderstanding. "Whatever may be His Excellency Baron von Bissing's personal inclinations," he wrote, "the Governor General is the representative among us of a usurping and openly hostile nation, in the presence of which we boldly affirm our rights to our independence and to have our neutrality respected." "If, for the time being, we bow to a stronger power than our own," wrote he at the same time to Cardinal von Hartmann, "we proudly cherish our rights, and entertain our unshaken confidence in the future!"

Submission to the regulations imposed by the occupying power so long as they did not wound either our conscience or the dignity of our feeling as patriots; repeated protests against acts of violence and injustice; unfailing fidelity to our king and to the legitimate authority of our country; and unconquerable trust in the future—all these are the

* NOTE—It has been established by convincing evidence that on several occasions the Cardinal's arrest had been decided upon, but the German authorities each time held back in view of the consequences of this step and their decision was never put into force.

principal points of the program sketched out by the Cardinal from the very beginning of the occupation and to which he faithfully adhered up to the hour of deliverance.

The letters exchanged between the Cardinal and Baron von Bissing are very numerous and touch on very varied topics. The Governor General shows himself alternately conciliatory and quarrelsome, menacing and argumentative. But unfailingly he finds himself up against the calm and sereneness of a man strongly convinced of his rights and thoroughly confident in the justice and holiness of his cause.

Baron von Falkenhausen, Baron von Bissing's successor in the office of Governor General, stands out as the type of an autocratic and brutal officer. He declared on his arrival in Belgium that he declined to discuss with the Cardinal questions which had no direct connection with religious matters.

This implied prohibition did not restrain His Eminence from sending with his usual frankness and vigor protests to the Governor against the breaches of law committed by him or his officers, and notably against the arrest of state officials who had been charged with having refused to collaborate with the enemy administration and against measures taken by the occupying power to despoil the Belgians of the produce of the soil.

From the very beginning of the occupation, without allowing himself to be repelled by the successive refusals with which his requests had been met, His Eminence had constantly asked for sanction to send to the prisoner camps in Germany priests of Belgian nationality who could speak both native tongues. As the new Governor General had declared that in religious matters he would readily welcome any demands that came from the Belgian episcopacy, the Cardinal again returned to the charge, but his persistence had no greater success than before.

The same happened with several other requests made by him in which he pleaded for measures to be taken to further the religious welfare of the railway men and of those persons who had been arrested and were awaiting their trial in Belgian prisons. If Baron von Falkenhausen ever

consented to take notice of any demands that were in any way connected with religious affairs, it was only to reply that he was not in a position to grant them.

The one who corresponded at great length with the Cardinal was Baron von der Lancken, head of the political department at government headquarters. At the very beginning of the occupation he came into touch with His Eminence. For all that, his first letters to the Cardinal date only from the commencement of 1916.

After this he intervenes in all the important matters which became the object of discussion between the Cardinal and the Germans; namely, deportations, the patriotic action of the priests, church demonstrations, the severance of administrative powers, the disastrous policy of the "Centrales," etc.

His letters betray the cold reserve of a diplomat. Contrary to his chiefs, he never loses his temper. If, very often at the request of the Governor General, he undertakes to take up and plead the bad cases brought forward by the representatives of the empire, he acts for them without enthusiasm, without conviction, almost in dilettante fashion.

He takes delight in these epistolary jousts, and at certain moments his correspondence with the Cardinal assumes the glamour of an academic discussion in the course of which the opponents argue out questions of right, of general policy, even those of philosophy. On the other hand, it seems that occasionally Baron von der Lancken did earnestly endeavor to soften the rigor of measures imposed by the military authorities.

During the four years of occupation, the Governor General, and following his example the whole of Germany, had constantly reproached the Cardinal with having overstepped his rôle of bishop. When at the beginning of the invasion he condemned the crimes committed by the German troops; when he rose in anger against the deportation of workmen; when he declared that it was every one's duty to love his country and to remain faithful to it even under oppression; when he sought to uplift the fainting heart of the Belgian population with the hope of a better future, he was accused

of having misused his pastoral functions and of having pursued political ends.

Over and over again the Cardinal gloriously defeated his accusers. He had the satisfaction of seeing his conduct justified by the Imperial Government itself.

On October 17th, 1918, Baron von der Lancken presented himself at Archbishop's House. In the name of the Governor General and of the Berlin government, he announced to His Eminence the approaching release of all political prisoners and handed to him a note which commences with words vindicating the policy pursued by the Cardinal: "You are in our estimation the incarnation of occupied Belgium of which you are the venerated and trusted pastor. For this reason, it is to you that the Governor General and my government also have commissioned me to come and to announce that when we evacuate your soil we wish to hand over to you unasked and of our own free-will the political prisoners serving their time either in Belgium or in Germany."

This was an avowal of defeat. At the close of the struggle, which he had waged for four years against the Cardinal, the German Governor General acknowledged himself beaten. All his policy of coercion as well as his diplomatic subterfuges had broken down before the strong and unbending will of a man who, in everything and at all times had this one thing alone in view—to do his duty.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

THE translators by way of preface have only this to remark: That the work undertaken by them to give an English rendering to the present correspondence has been a real labor of love.

Near spectators of the events which took place in Belgium during the occupation, the news of which leaked out at odd times in spite of the German censorship, we came to entertain for His Eminence, who largely loomed in these events, great admiration and sympathy, so that when the work of translating a series of letters which reflected the sturdiness, stanchness and unflagging courage of this stout champion of Belgian rights was offered to us, we gladly and lovingly accepted the honorable task.

If our humble collaboration is to result, as we hope it will, in making still better known the saintly virtues of a Prince of the Church who, like St. Thomas of Canterbury and many other churchmen in history, was prepared to give up even his life for his flock and their rights, we shall be more than proud in having had some small share in bringing this about, while at the same time we beg the reading public, in view of the many difficulties with which a work of this kind is hedged, to condone any discrepancies or other faults that may have crept in in the course of our endeavor to reveal to them the minds of the several writers.

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CHAPTER I

FIRST RELATIONS OF THE CARDINAL WITH VON BISSING

UNDER the government of Von der Goltz (September 3rd-December 3rd, 1914), there was no interchange of correspondence between the Cardinal and the Governor General. Their relations were limited to an exchange of mutual visits.

Shortly after the arrival at Brussels of the first German Governor, the Cardinal called upon him and asked him to intercede with the Imperial Government for the repatriation, as soon as possible, of the priests and teachers who had been deported at the time of the invasion. He drew his attention to the fears of the Belgians remaining in the country, and of the refugees wishing to return to Belgium, who dreaded seeing their young men deported to Germany for the purpose, presumably, of being incorporated in the ranks of the German army. The Cardinal had already started negotiations on this subject with the Governor of Antwerp, General von Huene. As a result of these, Von Huene had entered into an agreement, applicable to the province of Antwerp, according to which, (1) the civic guards having laid down their arms would not be molested, (2) young men would neither be deported to Germany nor in any way pressed into the service of the German army. The Cardinal, during the course of his visit, requested Von

der Goltz to ratify this agreement, to extend its application to the whole country and to guarantee its observance by whoever might be his successor. The Governor promised to give the Cardinal's wishes his favorable consideration.

The very next day the Governor General in person went to Malines with his reply. He promised to use all the influence he could to obtain the repatriation of deported priests and teachers. As regards Von Huene's agreement, he did not hesitate to ratify it and extend it to the whole of Belgium. He was much less explicit about binding his successor to any course of action. "We have no use," he added, "for young Belgians; their presence in our ranks would be a danger to us." The Governor expressed his wish to see normal life restored at an early date. The Cardinal answered that it was his wish also, but that the people were too deeply impressed by the tragic events which had marked the beginning of hostilities to allow them to feel any confidence. He insisted particularly on the arbitrary proceedings which were responsible for the massacre of one hundred and forty victims at Aerschot. This threw the General into an embarrassment which he altogether failed to disguise. The interview ended with the mutually expressed wish to see the schools soon reopened.

On December 3rd, 1914, Von der Goltz's place was taken by Von Bissing. Hardly had the new Governor been appointed, when he realized that the task he had undertaken, and which he knew to be a hard one, would be made much easier for him if he succeeded in checking the growth of any hostility on the part of the Belgian clergy and their superiors. But he was wary. He knew how unanimous was the feeling of Belgian priests and bishops in face of the invader; so to obtain his end he took a roundabout way. Instead of addressing Mgr. Mercier directly, he wrote to Cardinal von Hartmann, Archbishop of Cologne, whom he had known for a long time, and asked him to intervene in his favor with the Belgian primate.

The following is the letter which he sent to him on the day after he took up his new duties:

The Governor General of Belgium,
Brussels, December 4th, 1914.

To His Eminence Cardinal von Hartmann, Cologne:

Your Eminence will have heard, no doubt, of my nomination to the post of Governor General of Belgium. It is a mission by which I am much honored, but the task which I have undertaken by accepting it is in every respect a difficult one; it is only natural then that I should try to find influential persons who, though they may not be able to support me in the fulfillment of this duty, yet will be anxious not to increase the difficulties of it. In a large part of Belgium the Catholic clergy represent a force whose importance cannot be overrated; therefore, I should not wish to ignore negotiating with them and their heads, not only in the interests of my mission, but likewise in the interest of the country and of the Catholic population. In order to pave the way for these relations, I address your Eminence, asking you to be so kind as to inform the Cardinal of Malines that I should be very pleased to enter into personal relations with him, whether it be that he give me an opportunity to have an interview with him at Malines, for so long as the time at my disposal allows, or that he will have the kindness to pay me a visit at Brussels.

I hope to convince him during our interview that I am determined to do all in my power to satisfy the claims of the Catholic Church; but, on the other hand, I expect him to recognize the earnest wish which inspires me to attach supreme importance to alleviating the misery which present circumstances have created in Belgium, though, of course, safeguarding at the same time our military interests. I take the liberty to inform your Eminence that the head chaplain, Doctor Mittendorf, came yesterday; his mission is to supervise and extend the work of the Catholic chaplains and to see to it that the spiritual wants of the numerous troops of occupation and of the wounded be in no wise neglected. The Chaplain General has received the needful instructions from the Catholic "Feldprobst"; I have supplemented them and, in agreement with his superior, I have recommended

him to get into touch with the bishops as soon as possible in the course of his tour through Belgium.

I expect from this line of conduct a twofold result: I hope that my intentions and my actions will be in accord with the wishes of your Eminence and also promote the general weal.

Wishing to convey to your Eminence my profoundest respect, I have the honor to be your Eminence's most devoted servant,

The Governor General of Belgium,
(Signed) BARON VON BISSING,
Cavalry General.

Cardinal von Hartmann hastened to forward to Mgr. Mercier the letter of Von Bissing, to which he gave his warm support:

Cologne, December 6th, 1914.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines:

I take the liberty to forward to your Eminence the letter which has been sent to me by the new Governor General of Belgium, in which he expresses his wish to have an interview with your Eminence. I desire to second his request as warmly as possible. This interview will assuredly be of great use, for the General, whom I have had the honor of knowing for a long time, is an intelligent, discreet, just and benevolent man, who sincerely feels all he has written in his letter, and whose heart's desire will be to respond to the wishes of the bishops.

On my part, I have begged him earnestly to lay to heart the following points:

(1) To allow the Belgian priests who have been found innocent and who are now prisoners in German camps to return to Belgium.

(2) To allow the Nunciature free communication with the Holy See and with the bishops, likewise free intercourse between the latter and Rome.

(3) To facilitate the immediate publication in Belgium of the Encyclical of November 1st.

I have acquainted the competent "Armee Bischof" with the desires of your Eminence, which I have most earnestly indorsed, concerning the spiritual interests of Flemish prisoners. I hope he will manage to satisfy claims which are so justifiable.*

If I can still be of any use to your Eminence in this matter, it goes without saying that I am at your service; I am also ready to do all in my power to lighten your cares.

Respectfully kissing your Eminence's hand, I have the honor to be your Eminence's devoted servant in the Lord,

(Signed) FELIX CARDINAL VON HARTMANN,
Archbishop of Cologne.

The Cardinal did not reply till December 28th to the letters of the Governor General and of Cardinal von Hartmann. Von Bissing did not wait for his answer before he acquainted him with the fact that the priests who had been deported to Germany were to be set at liberty at an early date:

General Government of Belgium Offices,
Sekt. Ic. No. 456. *Brussels, December 9th,* 1914.

To Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines, at Malines:

Following on the note which has been forwarded to me by the head of the civil administration, I have the honor to make to your Eminence the following communication:

The ministry of war at Berlin has given orders to set at liberty all priests detained in Germany, provided no charge has been made against them; so that I have every reason to believe that priests who have duties as teachers will return without further delay.

As regards Count Cornet d'Elzius, I have taken the necessary steps with the competent German authorities. I shall not fail to let you know the result.†

The Governor General,
(Signed) VON BISSING.
Cavalry General.

* NOTE—From the very beginning of the occupation Mgr. Mercier had begged Cardinal von Hartmann to use his influence that such prisoners might have priests knowing Flemish put at their disposal.

† NOTE—The Count Cornet d'Elzius had been arrested for taking up in his motorcar an Englishman suspected of spying.

In reply to this communication the Cardinal's secretary, Very Rev. Canon Vrancken, sent to the Governor General a note to call his attention to the fact that his Eminence was also interested in lay teachers.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
December 16th, 1914.

By dispatch dated December 9th, 1914, Sekt. Ic. No. 456, His Excellency the Baron von Bissing, Governor General of Belgium, has been pleased to inform His Eminence the Cardinal Archbishop of Malines that by a decision of the ministry of war at Berlin the members of the Belgian clergy detained in Germany will be set at liberty at an early date, on condition that no charge has been made against them.

In consequence, His Excellency expresses the hope that ecclesiastics engaged in the duties of teaching will be soon set at liberty.

But it is not in these alone that the Cardinal is interested.

His Excellency had asked, besides this, for the liberation of lay teachers in primary schools, whom Belgian military law puts on the same footing as members of the clergy.

The absence of these teachers from the country is causing great difficulties in the organization of the people's education.

. . . . . .

On December 16th the Cardinal had at Brussels an interview with Von Bissing. On the following day the latter repaired to Malines, where he was received at the Archbishop's house. In the course of these two interviews the Governor General reiterated the sentiments he had already manifested in his letter to Cardinal von Hartmann. He insisted especially on the desire he entertained to guard the religious interests of Belgium, but he expected in return that the Belgian clergy and their head on their part would assume an attitude, if not friendly, at least conciliatory. He had already, he said, obtained the liberation of guiltless priests deported to Germany; he now intended to solicit the Im-

perial Government for the speedy release of lay teachers.

In order to show his good-will toward the ecclesiastical authorities, he gave the Cardinal every facility to communicate with the Belgian suffragan bishops.

The Cardinal thanked Von Bissing for his benevolent attitude, but called his attention to the fact that the Belgians, whatever might be the feelings of the Governor General toward them, would not forget the horrors which had marked the beginning of the invasion.

Von Bissing cut him short. He said that he could not discuss the conduct of the German army, which, he maintained, was fully justified by the attitude of the Belgian people.

There was discussed also a report of the commander at Heidelberg complaining of bad treatment by the Belgians of German doctors who were prisoners, and threatening reprisals on the Belgian doctors and dispensers, numbering about thirty, interned in that town. Von Bissing asked the Cardinal to intervene with the Belgian Government to put an end to this abuse.

Lastly, he offered to forward to Cardinal von Hartmann the answer which His Eminence would be pleased to give to the letter written by the former on December 6th.

As a result of these interviews, the Cardinal sent to Von Bissing the following letter:

Archbishop's House, Malines,
December 28th, 1914.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels:

Sir—I have delayed for some time my reply to Cardinal von Hartmann's letter under date of December 6th, in which my most Eminent colleague conveyed to me the expression of your good-will toward Belgium. Your Excellency has kindly offered to forward my reply, herewith inclosed, to its destination.

Since the above date I have had the honor of entering into personal communication with your Excellency, and, as the Cardinal of Cologne led me to expect, I can only express

myself as satisfied with the dispositions made by your Excellency in regard to myself and in regard to the matters I had the opportunity and the honor to commend to your notice.

In particular, I thank your Excellency for having notified me of the release from imprisonment of the guiltless priests deported to Germany, and I trust you will continue your efforts to bring about also the release of our schoolmasters, who, as I have had the honor of pointing out to your Excellency, cannot be put in the same category as prisoners of war.

I am thankful to your Excellency for having granted me authority to communicate with the suffragan bishops of Belgium whenever I may judge it useful, and I am gratified also to know that you have consented to take steps on behalf of Count Cornet d'Elzius, although these steps have so far been without result.

On my own side, I am still desirous of negotiating with my Government in order to satisfy the Commandant of Heidelberg, who complains of cruelties inflicted on certain German doctors and who threatens reprisals, as your Excellency will remember, on the thirty Belgian doctors and dispensers interned at Heidelberg. But to render any steps of mine effective, I ought to know who these German doctors are that underwent these indignities and when and where they underwent them.*

Your Excellency has made it your business to assure me of the sincerity of your good-will toward Belgium. As a soldier, you will understand how anxious I am to give expression in my own turn to the feelings with which I am animated toward yourself. My esteem for your Excellency's person, my gratefulness for the care which you manifest for the religious interests of the country, are deeply sincere, as also is my desire, as far as in me lies, to lighten and in no way to aggravate the burden of your charge and its responsibilities. Nevertheless, I regard it as my strict duty in the interests of truth to add that, no matter what the personal dispositions of Baron von Bissing may be, the Governor General represents amongst us here a

* Editor's Note—The Governor General never furnished any details.

usurping and hostile nation, in whose presence we assert our right to independence and respect for our neutrality. Further, as guardian of the moral and religious interests of Belgium, I protest against the acts of injustice and violence of which my compatriots have been the innocent victims.

In the letter to Cardinal von Hartmann, herewith inclosed and which I invite your Excellency to read, I, as a Belgian citizen and a bishop of the Belgian Church, give free rein to the indignation aroused in me by the words spoken by the Imperial Chancellor and by his travesty of the truth.

Kindly accept, Governor General, the expression of my respect.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

The following is Cardinal Mercier's letter to Cardinal von Hartmann inclosed with the foregoing:

Archbishop's House, Malines,
December 28th, 1914.

To His Eminence Cardinal von Hartmann, Archbishop of Cologne.

Most Eminent Lord—The very kind letter dated December 6th, with which your Eminence honored me, gave me lively pleasure and most sincerely do I thank you for the same.

I greatly appreciated at the time the steps taken by your Eminence to secure for the Belgian and French priests imprisoned in Germany the same treatment as is accorded to officers.

Your Eminence's intervention on behalf of the guiltless ecclesiastics imprisoned at Munsterlager and at Celle has been successful. All the priests belonging to a religious order, except two, have been set free. I have not yet been authorized to send priests to minister to our compatriots imprisoned in Germany, but your letter to the "Armee Bischof" gives me every confidence that on this point also we shall at length obtain satisfaction.

I had the honor of interviewing at Brussels and of receiving later at Malines his Excellency the Governor General, Baron von Bissing.

He appeared to me to be all that your Eminence had described and such as he represented himself in the letter you had the goodness to acquaint me of. I mean that he is a man both just and prudent, and truly anxious as well to further rather than obstruct the interests of religion in Catholic Belgium. He himself has had the kindness to inform me of the release of our imprisoned priests, and he gives me grounds for expecting the speedy return to freedom of our lay schoolmasters. Further, he has accorded me every facility for seeing my fellow bishops.

In my view, he has accurately defined the terms upon which the relations between Belgians and himself become possible and desirable. Without expecting to be welcomed as a friend, he requests all, more especially the religious authorities, not to render his task heavier than it is. On this point I am in full accord with the Governor General. As in the first days of the war we counseled our faithful to refrain from all hostile acts against the enemy's army, so now at this moment we recommend them to abide by the military regulations in so far as these wound neither our consciences as Christians nor our feelings as patriots.

Nevertheless, it must be clearly understood that, though for the moment we thus bend to the yoke of a power which is stronger than ourselves, we proudly decline to waive our rights or our unshakable confidence in the future.

It must be stated, furthermore, that the comparative good-will shown to us at present in no wise atones for the outrages to which Belgians have been so cruelly subjected. When the Imperial Chancellor in his speech on December 2d dared to say, "We shall remember after the war the wrongs done to our defenseless compatriots in enemy lands, wrongs which clash with all the laws of civilization," he went beyond all bounds; and in so far as these words were aimed at Belgium he uttered a monstrous lie.

I am personally acquainted with hundreds who have been the victims of wrongs contrary to all the laws of civili-

zation and I am in possession of details which would make any fair-minded man shudder—horrors indeed which recall the pagan persecutions of the three first centuries of the Church. I was loath to believe these stories before I personally had made an unbiased and now completed investigation of them.

The evidence has been overwhelming; and on my oath I affirm that up to the present hour I have been unable to establish one single act of savagery inflicted by a Belgian civilian on a German soldier, while, on the other hand, I am aware of hundreds of acts of cruelty "clashing with all the laws of civilization" committed by German soldiers on innocent Belgians. Your Eminence will understand that patriotism and justice impose upon me the duty to go on protesting against these crimes until they have been punished; and I will add that if you were in possession of all the evidence that I have gathered, your own sense of righteousness would compel you to unite your protest to ours.

Accept, Most Eminent Lord, with the expression of my thanks, the homage of respect and religious devotedness.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

Editor's Note—Von Bissing refused to forward this letter to its destination. He openly admits this in a letter to the Cardinal dated December 31st, which is given in full in the chapter dealing with the pastoral "Patriotism and Endurance."

CHAPTER II

THE CARDINAL ASKS VON BISSING'S AUTHORITY TO SEND BELGIAN PRIESTS INTO PRISONERS' CAMPS IN GERMANY

Archbishop's House, Malines,
December 16th, 1914.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General of Belgium.

Your Excellency—The numerous Belgian prisoners of war in Germany, notwithstanding the priestly care which the German clergy may be lavishing on them, are, on account of their ignorance of the language, deprived of religious succor.

A sound organization of the care of souls would require the sending to Germany, for the term of hostilities, of a few Belgian priests conversant with both our national languages.

As your Excellency is concerned about the religious interests of our people, would you not consent to take steps with the Imperial Government to obtain for some of our priests authorization to attend to our prisoners?

For this I should be extremely obliged to you.

Kindly accept, your Excellency, the expression of my highest esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

EDITOR'S NOTE—This letter remained without an answer. Later von Bissing informed the Cardinal that the steps which he had taken at headquarters to comply with His Eminence's request had not been successful.

CHAPTER III

SALARIES OF THE CLERGY

In order to obtain their salaries, the officials of the Belgian state who remained at their posts under the German occupation had to sign a declaration by which they pledged themselves not to undertake or omit anything which could embarrass the German administration in occupied Belgian territory. The Governor General wanted to subject priests to the same formality. The Cardinal fought against this energetically; he drew attention to the fact that ministers of worship in Belgium are not officials and that their salaries were paid them by way of compensation. Von Bissing replied that he did not share in this view, but that he would nevertheless be satisfied with a declaration from the Cardinal that the Belgian bishops had no intention of disturbing public order. He would consider this pledge as binding the whole body of the Belgian clergy.

The following are the letters exchanged on this subject between the Cardinal and the German administration:

Brussels, December 28th, 1914.

The Chief Administrator Attached to the Governor General of Belgium.

Order No. 11*a* 1057.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Malines.

I inclose for your Eminence's perusal a copy of a communication made to the ministry of justice. I would request your Eminence to take all the necessary steps to make the members of the Catholic clergy sign the declarations which are the subject of the inclosed communication. If

your Eminence will consent to sign this declaration, I would ask you to send it on to me and immediately to notify the official whose duty it is to pay you your salary. I, likewise, would ask you to carry out these same instructions in the case of the higher clergy.

The declarations of the other ecclesiastics are to be collected and sent to the competent agent of the treasury and to the official in charge of the payment of salaries.

A list of the names of such ecclesiastics as have signed the declaration must be drawn up in the same order as appears on the pay list. This list must be sent to me. Your Eminence will also be kind enough to compile and forward me a list of the ecclesiastics whose salaries are not to be paid.

Concerning the drawing up of the pay lists, I would ask your Eminence to come to an understanding with the provincial presidents of those German civil administrations who exercise their functions in your diocese.

For the Governor General,
(Signature illegible).

The following communication was inclosed with the preceding letter:

Brussels, December 28th, 1914.

In view of the fact that ecclesiastical salaries are relatively small and that, in consequence of the war, a great many ministers of worship have had every other source of income considerably diminished, I consent to the priests being paid their salaries in full, so long as they have not been paid from other sources, viz.: in the provinces of Brabant, Hainault, Namur, Limbourg, Liege and Luxemburg, from September 1st, 1914, and in the provinces of the two Flanders and of Antwerp from October 1st. The proposal to pay ecclesiastics their salaries even in part from July 1st, 1914, cannot be entertained, as by this arrangement they are already privileged in comparison with all those who are ordinarily receiving remuneration from the state; for the German Government has only taken in hand the adminis-

tration of the state revenue of Belgium since September 1st, for a part of Belgium, and from October 1st for the other part. In consequence, it is impossible for it to pay the salaries of the preceding months.

To receive their salaries, ecclesiastics must sign the following formal pledge:

"Not to undertake anything against the German administration in the occupied Belgian territories and to avoid anything that could in any way prejudice its interests."

Those ecclesiastics who have resigned or who have abandoned their posts, or who through force of circumstances are hindered from filling them, shall not receive their salaries. The same applies to those who have received their salaries from other sources. The ecclesiastics must give the agent of the treasury, or the official in charge, a written declaration testifying that they have not yet been paid.

Those ecclesiastics who shall act contrary to their pledges will be punished according to the laws of war and will be deprived of all further salary.

I have communicated the present order to His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines, to the bishops of Bruges, Ghent, Liege, Namur and Tournay, to the presidents of the synods of the Protestant churches, to the council of administration of the Free Protestant Church, to the central committee of the Anglican Church and the chief rabbi of Brussels. I have asked them to take the necessary steps to collect the declarations of the ministers of worship and to hand them over to the officers whose duty it is to pay the salaries.

I inclose with this communication the pay lists of the clergy of East Flanders, requesting that the order may be carried out. For the other provinces, I have given orders to the various presidents of the German civil administration to arrange with the ecclesiastical authorities about drawing up the pay lists. As soon as these reach me, I will hand them over to the minister of justice.

For the Governor General,
(Signature illegible).

Archbishop's House, Malines,
January 27th, 1915.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—A communication from your administration informs us that the German Government of the occupied part of the country offers to arrange for the payment of the clergy's salaries from September 1st or October 1st, 1914, but on condition that the various members of the clergy sign a declaration by which they pledge themselves not to undertake anything and to refrain from everything which might be prejudicial to the German administration.

Certain considerations which have, I believe, escaped the civil administrator's notice will make the juridical and legal status of the Belgian clergy clear, and will, I feel sure, receive your Excellency's attention.

First. Ministers of worship are not state functionaries.

Second. Their salaries are paid them as an indemnity in compensation for confiscated ecclesiastical property.

The members, therefore, of the clergy neither take an oath nor give even a pledge to the Belgian Government, but are merely subject, like ordinary citizens, to the general laws of the country.

First. I said, your Excellency, that ministers of worship in Belgium are not public functionaries.

Our Court of Appeal has explicitly recognized this in its decree of March 4th, 1847, in which it affirms that by virtue of their office ministers of worship have no executive authority, nor do they exercise any. In fact, only those can be regarded as such, says the decree, who either directly or indirectly are delegated by the law or by the Government to exercise any kind of authority; and ministers of religion have certainly no function of this nature.

Second. I added that the salaries are paid to ministers on the ground of indemnity. In the terms of Article 117 of the Belgian Constitution, "salaries and pensions of ministers of worship are charged to the State; the neces-

sary sums to meet these are included in each year's budget."

The discussions preceding the framing of this article show that the Congress looked upon salaries and pensions for the clergy as a compensation on the grounds of indemnity for the ancient privileges of which the Catholic Church was deprived at the time of the confiscation of ecclesiastical property.

From the very beginning of our national independence, His Highness the Prince de Mean, Archbishop of Malines, anxious to guarantee to the Catholic religion that full and entire liberty which alone can secure for it peace and prosperity, wrote to the National Congress as follows: "The State has appropriated ecclesiastical property only with the obligation of providing adequately for the cost of public worship and the maintenance of its ministers; as witness the first article of the French law of November 2d, 1789. The Holy See on its side only ratified the alienation in the interests of peace, expressly stipulating that the Government should undertake to provide the clergy with a competent salary, as evidenced both by the 13th and 14th articles of the Concordat of 1801, as also by the Bulls referring to these. In order to provide against unjust preferences and on the plea of these salaries, to prevent any agent of the executive power from interfering with the free exercise of public worship by bringing to bear any illegitimate influence on the opinions and conduct of ecclesiastics, it would be needful that the apportionment of these subsidies be fixed by law." *

In fact, the legal Government has never exacted from the clergy a declaration antecedent to any payment of salaries. If the German Government were to exact it, it would impose on the clergy a status inferior to that guaranteed them by the Belgian Constitution.

I firmly trust that the Governor General will give his fair-minded attention to the views herewith exposed and will admit their soundness.

* See the discussions of the National Congress, by Huyttens, Vol. 1, p. 525.

I beg your Excellency to receive the expression of my greatest esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
February 9th, 1915.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—Since I have the opportunity,* may I remind your Excellency of my letter of January 27th relative to the salaries of the clergy? My colleagues in the episcopate, whose ideas as well as my own I gave expression to, are as anxious as myself to find a solution. When I say my colleagues, I must make a reservation in the case of the Bishop of Tournay, who finds it materially impossible to communicate his views to us.

Believe me, your Excellency, I feel sure it is superfluous for me to make this declaration that the Belgian bishops have no designs against public order. If ever a member of the clergy forgot his duty on this point, or if the German authorities were to consider him as having done so, we only make one request, viz., that the case be brought to the notice of the bishop of the diocese to which such a one may happen to belong.

Receive, my dear Governor General, the assurance of my very high esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

Governor General of Belgium's Office.
Brussels, February 17th, 1915.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Malines.

I have the honor to acknowledge your Eminence's esteemed letters of January 28th and February 9th.

I cannot entertain the views which your Eminence puts forward in your first letter. It is a question of a measure arising out of the war. This measure in no wise affects the

* NOTE—His Eminence at the same time was writing to the Governor General to intercede on behalf of the cure of Forrières. (See below.)

position of the clergy in regard to the State as laid down by the Belgian Constitution and Legislature. Moreover, it in no wise constitutes a precedent. On the conclusion of the war it loses all its force.

To prove that I was within my rights in subordinating the payment of salaries to the signing of the proposed declaration, I might adduce the fact that already a number of the clergy, among them a bishop with all his chapter, have professed themselves in agreement with my way of thinking.

In your very esteemed letter of the 9th instant, your Eminence has declared that the Belgian hierarchy disclaims any intention of disturbing public order. The maintenance of public order constitutes my duty. Since, in view of the position of the episcopate in the Catholic Church, I am enabled to look upon the declaration of your Eminence as binding the whole clergy, I have great pleasure in informing you that I waive all claims to a personal declaration from each member of the clergy.

I offer to your Eminence the expression of my highest esteem, and I have the honor to be your Eminence's most devoted servant.

(Signed) FREIHERR VON BISSING,
Governor General.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
February 19th, 1915.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

I have received the letter with which your Excellency honored me on February 17th in answer to my communications of January 28th and February 9th.

Yesterday I had the opportunity of meeting my revered colleagues of the Belgian hierarchy at Tournay. They have begged me to become their spokesman with your Excellency and to express to you our lively satisfaction and our heartfelt gratitude.

Kindly accept the expression of my very high esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
March 1st, 1915.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

It has come to my knowledge that your Excellency has not received the letter which I had the honor to address to you on February 19th. It was, however, sent to you by registered post as is proved by the inclosed receipt.

The following is the text of what I then wrote.

(Here follows text of the preceding letter.)

I present again to your Excellency the expression of my very high esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

The Governor General of Belgium,
Brussels, March 3rd, 1915.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

In reply to the esteemed letter of your Eminence dated the 1st of this month, I have the honor to inform you that your letter of February 19th reached me in a regular manner through the post.

If I have delayed answering, it is because I desired to add to the thanks which I owe your Eminence for your last letter the announcement that the payment of ecclesiastical salaries is secure. I had given orders to the head of the administration to advise me of it. It is only today that he has informed me that it is an accomplished fact.

I rejoice to be able to make this communication to your Eminence; at the same time I beg you to accept my warm thanks for your kind letters of February 19th and March 1st, as well as my regret for the delay I have taken in answering.

I offer to your Eminence the expression of my highest esteem and I have the honor to be your most devoted servant.

(Signed) FREIHERR VON BISSING,
Generaloberst.

CHAPTER IV

VON BISSING COMPLAINS TO THE CARDINAL ABOUT THE MANNER IN WHICH THE FRENCH TREAT GERMAN OFFICER PRISONERS

Office of the Governor General of Belgium.
Brussels, December 31st, 1914.

Sekt. Ic. No. 1459.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

I have the honor in reply to the esteemed letter addressed to my predecessor on November 29th * to make to your Eminence the following communication:

It has often happened that German doctors who have been made prisoners by the French have reported on their return from captivity the ignominious treatment which had been inflicted on German officer prisoners. These reports have been communicated to all the Belgian and French officer prisoners in Germany in order that they make take up the matter with the proper authorities in their respective countries with a view to ameliorating the conditions of the German officers and thus to avoid eventual reprisals on the part of the German Government. These reports have been read at the same time to the Belgian ecclesiastics who are in the camp at Celle. No measures of reprisals have so far been taken.

I inclose with my letter a copy of one of these reports which have arrived here, with the observation that the bad treatment which is mentioned therein must have been meanwhile mitigated in consequence of diplomatic representations.

The Governor General.

(Signed) VON BISSING,
Cavalry General.

*NOTE—This letter has never been found.

The following note accompanied the Governor's letter:

The head doctor, Ter Peek, who was a prisoner for some time in the camp at Fougères and who, since his release, has been doing duty as head doctor with the regiment of the Landwehr, No. 74, reports as follows about the installations in that camp and the manner in which German officer prisoners are treated there:

"During their removal from the camp they were exposed to the insults of the mob, measures for their protection were altogether inadequate. Their military equipment has been taken from them—their caps, gaiters, etc.—and instead of these they have been given nightcaps and very shabby civilian clothes.

"Again, in the camp they were exposed to the jeers of the mob; the commandant at the camp is unable to protect them. The accommodation leaves much to be desired. The rooms cannot be warmed and the officers have to clean them out themselves. For beds they have only sacks of straw to lie on without any bedclothes. There are no sanitary arrangements. Their food is insufficient and of inferior quality and yet the officers only receive eighty centimes of their pay on the plea that the rest is kept for their maintenance."

These reports show that it is very urgent that steps should be taken to put a stop to this infamous treatment.

In reply to this letter, the Cardinal asked for details which were never forthcoming.

CHAPTER V

THE PASTORAL LETTER

PATRIOTISM AND ENDURANCE

THE sentiments which the Cardinal showed toward Von Bissing in his letter of December 28th, 1914, were expressed publicly by him in the pastoral letter of January 1st, 1915, entitled "Patriotism and Endurance." He recommended the faithful to abstain from hostile acts against the enemy army, to have that regard for the occupying power which the common weal demanded and to respect the regulations imposed so long as they did not interfere either with liberty of conscience or offend their patriotic feelings. But, on the other hand, he solemnly affirmed that this power had no legitimate authority and that consequently they were not bound in their inmost souls to show such a power esteem, loyalty or obedience. "The only legitimate power in Belgium," he added, "is that which belongs to our king, his government and the representatives of the nation. He alone has a right to the affection of our hearts and to our submission; for us, he alone represents authority."

Copies of this letter, issuing from the press of Mons. Dessain, the archbishop's printer, were taken to the various deaneries of the diocese by the seminarists leaving Malines for the Christmas holidays. A note accompanying the pastoral enjoined the priests to read the whole of it to the faithful "without omitting or erasing any part of it in spite of any orders to the contrary that might be issued by any other power."

In many churches the first part of the letter was read on Friday, January 1st.

The Cardinal's words, so courageous and so comforting, had a tremendous effect, so that the German authorities intervened without delay. On January 2d, at 6:15 a. m., three envoys of the Governor General, among them Baron von der Lancken, head of the political department, presented themselves at the Archbishop's House and asked to speak to the Cardinal.

His Eminence happened to be in the chapel preparing to celebrate high mass. They called for him and he went to the parlor where the visitors were waiting.

Von der Lancken began the interview. "Your Eminence," said he, "we come on behalf of the Governor General to tell you of his surprise at the pastoral which you have issued to the clergy and to the faithful. His Excellency thought he had reason to expect from your Eminence, if not sympathy, at least co-operation in appeasing the people. Your Eminence had led him to believe that such were your dispositions."

The Cardinal answered: "You tell me that his Excellency is astonished. Astonished at what?"

"At certain passages where your Eminence excites the people against Germany."

"Gentlemen," replied the Cardinal, "you are very much mistaken. If you have read my letter, you must agree that it is of a pacifying character. But you cannot ignore the fact that our people have undergone great sufferings; and when our people and our clergy suffer I suffer as much as they and it is my duty to tell them so."

"But there are words which have a tendency to excite the people."

"Have you read the letter?"

"Yes; you say that one owes neither loyalty nor submission to authority."

"I beg your pardon; I say, on the contrary, that one owes loyalty and attachment to legitimate authority. But I say that an occupying power is not a legitimate authority; to such a power one owes respect and abstention from every act of hostility. Moreover, I have not waited for your visit to enjoin the faithful to abstain from all hostile acts,

for as far back as the month of August I gave instructions to this effect and recommended respect for the military authorities."

"Still, there are in the letter words which tend to excite them against the German authorities."

"You must take the letter as a whole and not pick it to pieces. Taken as a whole, the letter preaches patience and submission so long as the present sufferings last."

"The Governor wishes to have an explanation."

"I will give the Governor the explanation he wants. Besides I have already written to him. I had reason to fear that mutual courtesy between individuals might give rise to misunderstandings. I have therefore written to him: 'Dear Governor General, I have for you personally a profound and sincere esteem. But it must be understood that these feelings do not imply the submission of my soul to a hostile nation which has invaded our territory.' "

"As regards this letter, the Governor will not be able to let it 'pass.' "

"It is written and it will remain."

"But why—" broke in an officer who till then had kept silent, "why remind the faithful in your letter of bygone events?"

"Because the conditions under which we live to-day cannot make us forget the atrocities which our people have endured. And when I preach to them today patience and resignation, I cannot affect ignorance of these atrocities."

"Your Eminence will give the Governor General an explanation."

"When?"

"We will let you know on your return to Brussels."

"All right, but I must tell you that tomorrow I shall not be free."

"Your Eminence must hold yourself at the disposal of his Excellency the Governor General at whatever day and hour he may choose."

"Gentlemen, I must repeat that tomorrow I am not free; I have to preside at a religious function at Antwerp."

"Has your Eminence already sent out the letter?"

"All the cures have received it."

"Your Eminence has therefore broken the regulation which forbids the publication of anything which has not been passed by the German censor."

"I know nothing of this regulation. It might well have been made known to me. As I knew nothing about it, I have not broken it."

"Has the letter been read?"

"It was read yesterday, January 1st, in many places; in any case, it will be read everywhere tomorrow."

"In that case," exclaimed Von der Lancken, with a look of despair, "we are too late!"

The visitors withdrew to report to their head, excusing themselves for having come at so early an hour. They begged his Eminence to hold himself at the Governor's disposal.

In the evening the following telegram came to the Archbishop's House:

Cardinal Mercier, Malines.
The Governor General begs your Eminence to renounce the journey which you intended to make to Antwerp to-morrow. The Governor General.

On Saturday evening emissaries of the German Government called on a large number of cures and forbade them to continue reading the letter. In a great many presbyteries they got possession of the pastoral by means of threats. An official search was made at Mons. Dessain's in Malines; all copies of the letter found on the premises were confiscated. Later Mons. Dessain was fined 500 marks.

On Sunday, January 3rd, in the evening, a German officer, accompanied by a soldier, came to obtain information from members of the archbishop's household as to whether his Eminence had not left the town of Malines that same day. The concierge's statement was not enough. He wanted, he said, the testimony of his Eminence's secretary or of some one immediately attached to his person. Brother Egidius, superintendent of the household, came and reassured the officer that his Eminence had not left the city. The officer and soldier left without insisting any further.

On Monday, January 4th, about 7 a. m., one of Von

Bissing's adjutants, Captain von Strempel, came to the Archbishop's House and handed to the Cardinal the following letter from the Governor General with a request for an immediate reply:

Office of the Governor General,
Brussels, December 31st, 1914.
January 3rd, 1915.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

I have the honor to acknowledge the letter which you addressed to me on December 28th. I have noted that your Eminence appreciates the spirit with which I am animated in the discharge of my duties toward the Belgian people and especially in regard to the spiritual and moral interests represented by your Eminence. On my side, I appreciate the sentiments manifested toward myself by your Eminence. But I have been painfully surprised by the concluding portion of your Eminence's letter, as also by the letter addressed by you to Cardinal von Hartmann. I have noted that even at this hour your Eminence adopts toward the German Government an attitude quite incompatible with the efforts which you are making in helping to heal your country's wounds. In the course of our interview I made it clear to your Eminence that events arising out of the necessities of the war and the behavior of the Belgian population could form no subject for discussion between us. To my great regret, your Eminence finds occasion in the letter you addressed to me, as well as in that to Cardinal von Hartmann, to go back to these events. I draw your Eminence's attention to the fact that the German Government is in possession of a number of proofs justifying completely the measures taken by the German troops against the Belgian people who have acted contrary to all international law. Hence I must protest most energetically when your Eminence accuses the responsible political authorities in Germany of lying and when you attack the honor of the German army, which has only acted in legitimate self-defense. Your Eminence must recognize with me

that so long as you believe yourself justified in expressing such ideas and sentiments, and even in maintaining them after my explanation, it is quite impossible for me to grant you the facilities for traveling which you request; for now, I cannot see any common ground on which we can work together with mutual confidence in the interests of the Belgian people. Neither can I transmit to its destination the letter which your Eminence has handed to me for Cardinal von Hartmann. It is impossible for me to forward a criticism so unjustifiable and so offensive to the higher authorities, both of the German Empire and of the German army. I return this letter to your Eminence.

At the moment of dispatching this letter your Eminence's pastoral has been brought to my notice. It has caused me a most disagreeable surprise. I must decline to make a detailed pronouncement on its contents, for no one can measure the results of the action taken by your Eminence, nor do I believe myself authorized alone to take the measures necessary to repair the harm done by this letter and at the same time to safeguard the rights and dignity of the German Government. First of all, in the interests of preserving good relations with the Belgian clergy, so sincerely desired by myself, I have waived my right to proceed against the priests, who, in circulating and in reading the pastoral, have merely obeyed the instructions of their archbishop. On the other hand, I have ordered the confiscation of copies of the letter which were found at the printing works, and I have decreed penalties against any one circulating them. It is clear that the reading of the letter has already provoked an agitation among the Belgian people. If graver events should result therefrom, your Eminence alone would have to bear all the responsibility. I am obliged to request your Eminence to at once forbid your clergy to read and to circulate your pastoral.

I beg your Eminence to answer by return of post the following questions:

(1) What relations has your Eminence had after the occupation of the country by German troops with the King

of the Belgians, and in particular with the King of England?

(2) Through what channel have these communications been maintained?

(3) What are the legal grounds on which your Eminence rests to ordain days of penance in accordance with a desire manifested by the King of England? (See the communication in Latin to the clergy, Vol. 113, part 3, dated Malines, Christmas, 1914.)

The bearer of this letter has orders to await your Eminence's reply and to bring it back to me.

I offer your Eminence the expression of my very high esteem and I have the honor to be your Eminence's devoted servant.

(Signed) FREIHERR VON BISSING,
Governor General.

The Cardinal observed to Von Strempel that an answer to such a document required reflection and this he could not give immediately; he begged him to return the same evening. The captain answered that his orders were not to leave the Archbishop's House without a reply. The Cardinal fruitlessly insisted that he should have time given him to work out his reply. The officer again and again rejoined: "I am in no hurry; I will wait." At a certain moment, as he seemed loath to let the Cardinal out of his sight, the latter said, "Use your liberty; I give you my word of honor that I shall not run away. Do you take me for a brigand?"

Finally, about 11 o'clock, his Eminence handed to Von Strempel the subjoined letter, begging him instantly to request the Governor's permission by telephone to return to Brussels and come again for the answer about 6 p. m.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
January 4th, 1915, 11 *o'clock a. m.*

To His Excellency the Governor General Baron von Bissing, Brussels.

Your Excellency—I am in receipt of the letter your adjutant, Captain von Strempel, did me the honor to deliver

from your Excellency and I am anxious to reply to it as soon as possible. Your Excellency must, however, allow me time for reflection before doing so. The greater part of the morning has been spent by your obliging delegate in copying the document. I shall have to study it at my leisure. I expect, however, to complete the required reply this evening. With your Excellency's approval, your adjutant might return for it this evening at 6.*

Accept, Excellency, the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

At this point some of his friends near him pressed the Cardinal to parry the blows that threatened him. He was advised, if not to withdraw the pastoral, at least to tone down some of its directness. Had the Cardinal the right to expose his priests to all the perils of a violent repression? In the general interests, would it not be better to give proof of a conciliatory spirit? Was it not sheer rashness to expose his own person to imprisonment, exile, or even a worse penalty? The severance of the pastor from his flock, would it not lay the diocese and the whole country open to perils of the gravest kind?

This was a critical hour.

After taking counsel of his immediate entourage, the Cardinal took time to reflect alone. He went to his private oratory to meditate and pray; then came back and drew up the following letter in which he declares that his act was fully deliberate and that he refuses either to disown or withdraw it:

Archbishop's House, Malines,
January 4th, 1915, 6 *p. m.*

To Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Your Excellency—The letters with which your Excellency has honored me dated December 31st, 1914, and January 3rd, 1915, embrace three parts.

The first part refers to my correspondence of December

*NOTE—The Governor General's answer was negative. Von Strempel was to await the Cardinal's answer at Malines itself.

28th last, both with your Excellency and his Eminence Cardinal von Hartmann. Your Excellency was kind enough to appreciate the mark of esteem which I had the opportunity of showing you. You remind me that you had expressed a desire to further the religious and moral interest with which I have been intrusted, also to relieve the sufferings of our people; and yet your Excellency seems persuaded that instead of falling in with your views I have taken up an attitude toward the German Government which to you is incompatible with this praiseworthy ideal.

Your Excellency is of the opinion that past events with their sad echoes still resounding within the soul of Belgium ought not to form the subject of either oral or written communications between us, and it seems you are surprised that even in private letters I have recalled these events and have also passed judgment upon them.

I appreciate fully your Excellency's anxiety to ward off further strife from our country, already so sorely tried, and no one acquiesces in this wish of yours more heartily than myself. Still, if by mutual co-operation we desire our work to have a durable character, our joint efforts must not rest on an equivocal basis. Duly impressed by the need of candor, I made a point of drawing a distinction between the personal relations of courtesy and mutual good-will I had the honor of cultivating with Baron von Bissing and those other relations which were demanded by my position toward the representative of a nation with whom we have the misfortune to be at war. I was encouraged by the hope that the clearness of my words would be welcomed, and I was certainly far from anticipating that it would involve the withdrawal of the general pass you granted me. Nevertheless, I bow to your decision. Hitherto, as a matter of fact, I have not gone beyond the limits of my diocese; nor shall I go beyond them in future.

The second part of your Excellency's dispatch refers to my pastoral letter. First of all, I am grateful to your Excellency for your decision to withdraw the prosecution of those priests who have read my letter from the pulpit as they were instructed to do. In doing this they acted in

obedience to their bishop. He alone is responsible for the orders he gives to his clergy. You seem, sir, apprehensive of a possible disturbance resulting from the public reading of my pastoral and you draw my attention to possible unpleasant consequences among the people. Allow me to inform you that you little understand the devotedness of my people. If in addressing them I had in any way concealed my views or had tried to force them into submission, they might have kicked against my orders. But my words to them were those of a father who trusts his children. I told them that I realized their sufferings and by virtue of this very knowledge was able to sympathize with them. I expounded to them in its entirety the gospel teaching on their relations with that power which for the time being was in occupation of a part of their country. I told them this: "Whatever feelings you may harbor within your inmost souls, you are bound, as far as your conscience and noble patriotism will allow, to comply in your external conduct with the regulations of the Government in occupation. Outwardly you are to obey the aforementioned decrees; nay more, it is the legitimate authority of your own government, in tacitly approving of them out of regard it has for the interests of public order, that obliges you to respect them."

As a Belgian, I understand my fellow-countrymen; and as a bishop I am well acquainted with my children; and I can therefore guarantee, Sir, that the public peace will not be disturbed if you forbid your subordinates to indulge in any further noisy demonstrations such as occurred in a considerable number of peaceful villages during the night of January 3rd.

If, on the other hand, you cannot see your way to allow me full freedom to influence my clergy and people by moral suasion alone; if, yielding to your personal fears, you have recourse to methods of intimidation, I shall no longer be able to answer, with the same assurance, for the maintenance of public order, and in that case I shall not require my clergy to resume the reading and the dissemination of my pastoral in defiance of your interdiction.'

Lastly, in the third part of your letter, your Excellency asks me about my relations with my own king and the King of England, and desires to be informed why, in conformity with the wish expressed by the King of England, I should have exhorted the faithful of my diocese to make January 3rd a special day of prayer. Frankly, your Excellency, these questions astonish me. The acts of one's private life, unless I am mistaken, are outside the jurisdiction of all governments, and consequently I feel justified in requesting your Excellency to assure me of the exact purport of your question. Does your Excellency claim the right to interfere with my private intercourse with my own sovereign, or with foreign rulers? This is not the first time I have ordered a day of prayer. My venerable episcopal colleagues in Austria, France and Germany have all acted in like manner. We have each and all been fired by the same desire to call down the blessing of God on our countries. This also I may add: That I have had no difficulty in becoming acquainted with the King of England's wish in this matter. A circular published by his Eminence Cardinal Bourne, Archbishop of Westminster, was sent to thousands of our Belgian refugees living at present in the United Kingdom. Many copies have reached me, but at the present moment I cannot put my hand on one of these circulars. I hope shortly to be able to find one and to forward it to your Excellency.

Accept, Excellency, the expression of my high esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

The next day, January 5th, the Cardinal sent to Von Bissing the following supplementary note:

Archbishop's House, Malines,
January 5th, 1915.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Your Excellency—I have the honor to inclose the pamphlet to which I referred in my letter of yesterday evening.

An error of date has crept into my letter. You must read, "During the night of January 2d-January 3rd."

I said yesterday that I could hardly see the drift of the question your Excellency put me in the third part of your letter. I think, on reflection, that your Excellency wished to know whether or not I had been influenced by considerations outside my pastoral office. I insist that my pastoral, both in letter and in spirit, is exclusively my work. I have taken the whole responsibility on myself.

I deeply regret having left the letter of Cardinal von Hartmann, dated December 6th, without a reply; and at present I find myself deprived of any direct means of communicating with him. Perhaps your Excellency will see your way to dispatch the subjoined letter after perusal. If you should find any difficulty, I beg you to take no notice of my request.

Receive, Excellency, the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

With this letter was inclosed the printed notice in which Cardinal Bourne announced that January 3rd should be observed as a day of penance.

Archbishop's House, Westminster, S. W.
December 15th, 1914.

Day of Humble Prayer and Intercession

You know already that, by the desire of His Majesty the King, the first Sunday of the New Year, January 3rd, which is also the Feast of the Most Holy Name of Jesus, will be kept throughout the country as a day of humble prayer and intercession to beg God's blessing upon the empire and the allied nations in these days of terrible conflict with our enemies, and to implore His divine consolation for those who thereby are exposed to anxiety, suffering and sorrow. Those who have already given their lives in the struggle will have their own special place in our supplication. The bishops, clergy and faithful of the Church in France will be united with us in this great public and in-

ternational act of intercession, and we know that our brethren in Belgium will be joined with us in heart and intention.

The following letter was at the same time handed to Von Bissing, with a request to forward it to its destination.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
January 5th, 1915

To His Eminence, the Right Reverend von Hartmann, Archbishop of Cologne.

Most Eminent Lord—Tardily, yet very sincerely, I thank your Eminence for your letter of December 6th last and for the very kind steps which you had the goodness to take on behalf of our priests and of our prisoners.

The special circumstances on which I prefer not to dwell do not allow me to say any more to your Eminence today.

United in prayer that in all things and in every way the will of God may be accomplished, I remain your Eminence's humble and devoted servant.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

The Governor General confined himself to replying by a simple acknowledgment.

Governor General's Office, Brussels,
January 6th, 1915.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

I have the honor to acknowledge the esteemed letter of your Eminence, dated yesterday, together with the pamphlet which you had the kindness to inclose with it and the letter which you have addressed to my very esteemed friend, Cardinal von Hartmann. It will be a great pleasure to me to forward the letter to its destination.

I avail myself of the occasion to forward to your Eminence a letter which Cardinal von Hartmann has asked me to transmit to you.

I offer to your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem, and have the honor to be your very devoted servant,

(Signed) Baron von Bissing,
Governor General.

On January 7th the Governor General addressed a printed circular to all the priests of the diocese of Malines, of which the following is a translation:

Governor General's Office,
Brussels, January 7th, 1915.

To the Clergy of the Diocese of Malines:

Following upon representations which I addressed to him on the subject of his pastoral letter, the effect of which in my opinion is of a nature to disturb and excite the public mind, Cardinal Mercier has declared to me by word of mouth and in writing that such had never been his intention and that he had never expected his letter to produce such an effect. He says he has above all in view to show the people the necessity of submission to the power of occupation, even in the case where a Belgian, animated by his deep-rooted patriotic feelings, might feel inclined to oppose the German administration.

The Cardinal has added that in case I feared his pastoral might disturb the public mind, he would not insist on forcing his priests, as he does at the end of his letter, to continue the reading of it on the following Sundays and to distribute it from house to house as well.

I have some fear of this kind.

I, therefore, renew my prohibition of January 2d to read and to distribute his pastoral. I would observe to the clergy that in the case of infringement of this order they will be opposing the Cardinal's intentions as expressed to me in writing.

(Signed) BARON VON BISSING,
Governor General.

At the same time the Governor General published through the Censored Press the following note:

Brussels, January 8th.

"His Eminence Mgr. Mercier, in accordance with an ancient custom, addressed to the faithful of his diocese for the feast of Christmas a pastoral letter in which he partly treats of the great political events of recent date. The foreign press has given inaccurate accounts of it and among

other things has alleged that in consequence of this pastoral the Cardinal has been imprisoned in his place at Malines by German officers and even that he has been already arrested. The Governor General declared officially that both these reports are devoid of all foundation. He has never dreamt of interfering with the liberties of the Prince of the Church in the exercise of his ecclesiastical functions. The pastoral, however, contained passages offensive to Germany, and though it was impossible for the German authorities to ignore them, yet, out of regard for the sacredness of the place and to avoid wounding the feelings of the faithful, the reading of the pastoral has not been prevented by force. The Governor General, in virtue of his decree of October 13th, 1914, which formally subjects all printed matter to the censorship of the Governor General, has confined himself to disciplinary measures demanded by the situation. The printer entrusted with the printing and distribution of the pastoral has accordingly been proceeded against for his infraction of the forementioned decree, and the copies found at his establishment have been sequestrated.

"In the course of correspondence with the Governor General the Cardinal has declared that, having regard to the opinion of the Governor General on the probable effect of its reading, he abstained from compelling the clergy to read the pastoral and to distribute it from house to house."

(Extract from the newspaper *La Belgique,* No. 64, January 9th, 1915.)

This communication of Von Bissing to the clergy of the diocese and to the censored press is a masterpiece of hypocrisy. While the Cardinal, trusting in the patriotic initiative of his clergy, had only declared that he would not renew the order intimated above, the Governor General leads one to understand that the Cardinal, in order to avoid all difficulty, desires that the clergy should refrain from the public reading and distribution of the pastoral.

This clever maneuver had not the result expected of it by Von Bissing. On Saturday, January 9th, Mgr. Everard, dean of St. Gudule, went to the Cardinal and soon

found out the snare which had been laid for the clergy of the diocese. Of this he forthwith by letter informed the cures of the deanery of St. Gudule and all the deans of the Brussels district. The report of this letter spread everywhere like wildfire, and in all the churches the reading of the letter was continued on Sunday, January 10th.

The following is the letter which Mgr. Everard addressed to the Cardinal a few days later:

Eminence—On Saturday, January 9th, I wrote to all my parish priests and to the rural deans of the district:

"I have just returned from Malines.

"Notwithstanding the written prohibition circulated last evening, his Eminence the Cardinal wishes his letter to be read. This written prohibition is deceptive and false.

" 'Neither by word nor in writing have I withdrawn anything, and at this moment I withdraw nothing of my previous instructions, and I protest against the violence which is done to the freedom of my pastoral office.'

"Such are the words dictated to me by the Cardinal.

"He added furthermore: 'Everything has been done to make me sign some modification of my letter. I have not signed them. Now it is sought to separate the clergy from me by preventing them from reading the letter. I have done my duty: my clergy will know how to do theirs.'

"Receive, my dear cure, the testimony of my respect."

Both in the town and in the outskirts on Sunday, January 10th, the pastoral was read at all masses and produced an excellent effect.

The reading took place without incident, opposition or protest. Only at Sublant, after the reading of the letter by the cure, M. Richard, did two officers accompany him to the sacristy and there tell him it had been forbidden to read the letter. His reply that he had only obeyed the order of his superior closed the incident.

There was naturally some excitement for the moment, but this disappeared almost immediately.

Up to now, nobody has interfered with us.

Will your Eminence accept the expression of my profound esteem?

(Signed) EDWARD EVERARD.

On January 11th, the Cardinal addressed to his clergy a letter in Latin of which the following is a translation:

Malines, Sunday Within the Octave of the Epiphany, 1915.

Very Reverend Fathers and Most Dear Fellow Workers:

You are acquainted, I believe, with a notice of the Governor General of Belgium published in the papers stating that the Cardinal Archbishop of Malines has in no wise been hampered in the free discharge of his ecclesiastical office. The facts themselves disprove the truth of this assertion.

As a matter of fact, on the evening of January 1st and throughout the whole of the following night, German officers entered the presbyteries and carried off or tried vainly to wrench from the priests' hands the pastoral, and in defiance of episcopal authority forbade you to read it to your congregations, threatening you or your parish with the direst penalties.

Even our dignity was not respected, for on January 2d, before daybreak at 6 o'clock, I received the order to go immediately that same morning and explain to the Governor General my letter to the clergy and the people. The following day I was forbidden to give benediction in the Cathedral at Antwerp. I have been forbidden to visit the other Belgian bishops.

As a citizen, as a shepherd of souls, and as a member of the sacred college of Cardinals, I protest, my dear fellow workers, that your rights as well as mine have been violated.

Whatever may be alleged to the contrary, experience has proved that this pastoral letter has provoked no occasion for sedition, but, on the contrary, it has contributed largely to the appeasing of the people's minds and to public tranquillity.

I congratulate you on having fulfilled your duty with firmness and moderation. Continue faithful, keeping up a stout yet pacific heart, remembering the words in which

I have already explained to you my mind clearly and entirely: "Be at the same time the best guardians of patriotism and the supporters of public order."

As for the rest, be "in spirit fervent, serving the Lord, rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, instant in prayer, communicating to the necessities of the saints." (Romans xii, 11-13.)

I beg you, do not forget me in your prayers; on my part, I shall not forget you in mine. Altogether, united by the close ties of brotherhood, let us commend to the Lord, the bishops, the clergy and the faithful "that they may see their duty and may have the strength to fulfill it." *

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

The deans are requested to give an account of all that has taken place in the parishes of their deaneries.

N. B.—For some time some ecclesiastics have affected lay attire; they are requested to resume from now on ecclesiastical dress.

The incidents provoked by the reading of the pastoral became known in other countries. Mr. Schreiner, the correspondent of the Associated Press of America, sent a telegram to the Cardinal, through the German authorities, requesting detailed information of his treatment by the German authorities. This telegram was delivered by the Kreischef of Malines:

The Kreischef Office, Malines,
January 9th, 1915.

To the Cardinal Archbishop of Malines.

By order of the Governor General I have the honor to forward to your Eminence the following telegram which was received by the Governor General with the request to communicate it to you.

*Collect for the Sunday within the Octave of the Epiphany.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier.

It has been rumored that your Eminence has been arrested, together with certain other persons who have cooperated in the dissemination of the pastoral letter. This report has produced a deep impression throughout America. For this reason I have been charged by the managers of the Associated Press to get into personal communication with your Eminence and to receive from you details of the alleged bad treatment to which you have been subjected. If your Eminence be agreeable, I beg you to inform me at the American Embassy at The Hague what can be published of your present position.

With kindest regards.

(Signed) GEORGE SCHREINER,

Correspondent of the Associated Press of America.

In case your Eminence deems it expedient to reply to this telegram, I place myself at your disposal to transmit your reply.

The Kreischef,

(Signed) G. VON WENGERSKY,
Colonel.

The Cardinal sent the following note to the Kreischef with his answer to Mr. Schreiner's telegram:

Cardinal Mercier presents to the Count Wengersky the expression of his high esteem and begs him to be good enough to forward the inclosed answer to the correspondent of the Associated Press of America:

George Schreiner,
Correspondent of the Associated Press of America,
American Legation, The Hague.

In reply to your telegram I regret to have to declare that a number of priests have had to submit to the violations of their homes, threats of fines or imprisonment and arrest. The printer of the pastoral letter was condemned to a fine of 500 marks. Myself received January 2d 6

o'clock morning three officers who brought me an order to remain at the disposal of Governor General; Sunday, January 3rd, received by telegram Governor General's prohibition to go to Antwerp to preside at religious ceremony.

Shall be obliged to you for acknowledging receipt of my wire.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

The Governor General refused to send the Cardinal's wire. He sent one of his emissaries to invite his Eminence to tone down the text of his answer to the correspondent of the Associated Press. The Cardinal refused energetically, declaring that what he affirmed expressed the bare truth. As he was not allowed to answer explicitly the questions asked of him by Mr. Schreiner, his Eminence confined himself to sending him, through the channel of the Kreischef of Malines and of the Governor General, the following answer:

George Schreiner,
Correspondent of the Associated Press of America,
American Legation, The Hague.

I quite understand the sympathy you wish to manifest toward me and I thank you for it; but I prefer for the present not to dwell on the vexatious proceedings to which you refer and to continue to confine myself to my duties as a bishop.

I repeat, however, that I have withdrawn and shall withdraw nothing of my pastoral letter.

(Signed) Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

CHAPTER VI

PROPOSAL FOR AN INQUIRY ABOUT PRIESTS IN THE DIOCESE OF MALINES PUT TO DEATH BY GERMANS

TOWARD the end of 1914 and at the beginning of 1915 the German Government established in Belgium various commissions of inquiry, composed entirely of imperial officials, whose object was to proclaim to the whole world that the German army was innocent of the crimes of which it had been accused by its enemies, and if now and then severe measures of repression had to be taken they must be ascribed solely to the brutal and savage conduct of the Belgian folk. The result of these one-sided inquiries appeared in a White Book, which will remain for future generations one of the most convincing witnesses of the duplicity, insolence and also of the folly of Prussian militarism.

The Kreischef of Malines proved himself a worthy representative of his Government. Pretending that he had learned from a newspaper article that priests of the diocese of Malines had been killed, though he knew by the Christmas pastoral letter the assertion of the Cardinal that thirteen members of the clergy had perished as victims of German barbarity, he communicates to his Eminence his scheme for an inquiry in the following terms:

The Kreischef, Malines,
No. 268/11. *January 20th,* 1915.

To His Eminence the Cardinal, Archbishop of Malines.

According to a newspaper article, several guiltless priests have been killed in the diocese of Malines.

In order to be able to start an inquiry, I beg your Eminence to be so kind as to let me know if this information be correct, and if the answer is in the affirmative to supply me with the names of the victims.

I should very much like to know under what circumstances these priests have been killed and which troops incurred the guilt of these crimes and on what date these events came to pass.

The Kreischef,

(Signed) G. von Wengersky,
Colonel.

The Cardinal answered without delay:

Archbishop's House, Malines,
January 24th, 1915.

To the Count von Wengersky, Kreischef, Malines.

Sir—I have the honor to acknowledge the letter 268/11, bearing date January 20th, which you have had the kindness to send me.

The names of the priests and religious of Malines diocese who to my knowledge have been put to death by German troops are the following: Dupierreux, of the Society of Jesus; the Brothers Sebastian and Allard, of the Congregation of Josephites; Brother Candide, of the Congregation of Our Lady of Mercy; Father Maximin, a Capuchin; Father Vincent, a minor conventual; Carette, a teacher; Lombaerts, Goris, De Clerck, Dergent, Wouters, Van Blaedl, parish priests.

On Christmas Day, when I published my pastoral letter, I did not yet know with certainty what had been the fate of the cure of Herent; since then his body has been found at Louvain and identified.

Other figures quoted by me in my pastoral letter ought now to be added. For instance, for Aerschot I gave the number of victims as ninety-one, but the total of Aerschotois dug up now reaches 143. However, the time has not yet come to insist on these detailed facts. Their enumeration will come to light in the inquiry which you lead me to expect.

It will be a consolation to me to see full light thrown upon events which I had to recall in my pastoral letter and on others of the same kind.

But it is indispensable that the results of the inquiry should appear to all with an authority beyond dispute.

With this end in view, I have the honor to propose to

you, my dear Count, and to the German authorities through your kind intervention, that the Commission of Inquiry be composed equally of German delegates and Belgian magistrates to be appointed by our Chief Justice, the whole to be presided over by the representative of a neutral country. I cherish the hope that his Excellency the Minister of the United States would not refuse to preside either himself or through a delegate of his own choice.

Accept, I beg you, dear Kreischef, the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

On February 2d the Kreischef summoned one of the Vicars General. Mgr. Van Roey went to the Kommandantur at 11 a. m. He found himself in the presence of an adjutant, who asked him the following questions: At what place had priests been killed? What day? By what troops? Do you aver that they were innocent?

Mgr. Van Roey replied that he had not been directly concerned in the project for an inquiry, but that, as far as he knew, his Eminence had corresponded about this matter with the Governor General or with the Kreischef.

"Yes," replied the adjutant, "we have here his Eminence's letter. The Governor General has taken cognizance of it and has sent it to us with annotations. We do not wish to disturb his Eminence again; we had hoped that you could provide the information we desire."

The interview ended by Mgr. Van Roey's declaring that all he could do was to submit to the Cardinal the Kreischef's wishes.

The very next day the latter addressed to Mgr. Van Roey the following letter:

The Kreischef, Malines,
February 3rd, 1915.

To Mgr. the Vicar General of His Eminence the Cardinal, Malines.

Monsignor—I should be obliged if you would fix some precise date on which I may expect an answer to the ques-

tions I put you concerning the priests shot in the diocese of Malines.

The Kreischef,
(Signed) G. VON WENGERSKY.

Mgr. Van Roey replied immediately:

Archbishop's House, Malines,
February 4th, 1915.

To Count von Wengersky, Kreischef, Malines.

Sir—I had the honor to hand to his Eminence the Cardinal Archbishop the demand for information which the adjutant has made regarding the priests shot in the diocese of Malines.

His Eminence tells me that to an identical inquiry which was addressed to himself personally he replied in his letter of January 24th last. I deem, therefore, that it is no business of mine to meddle in a matter which the Cardinal has already taken in hand himself.

Please accept, sir, the expression of my sincere esteem.
(Signed) ERN. VAN ROEY.

Following on this declaration of Mgr. Van Roey's, the Kreischef addressed another letter to the Cardinal himself.

The Kreischef of Malines,
February 8th, 1915.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Malines.

I should be much obliged if your Eminence would fix a date for receiving my adjutant. He is commissioned to ask your Eminence for precise details regarding the priests of the diocese of Malines who were shot.

I beg your Eminence to acept the expression of my deep respect and I have the honor to be your devoted servant,
(Signed) G. VON WENGERSKY,
Colonel and Kreischef.

The Cardinal replied, fixing the interview for February 9th, but his letter was delivered to the Kreischef after some delay so that the adjutant was unable to present himself at the Archbishop's House on the appointed day. Von Wengersky told the Cardinal of it:

The Kreischef of Malines,
February 9th, 1915.

To His Eminence the Cardinal Archbishop of Malines.

To my great regret, I have to inform your Eminence that, as the result of a mistake, your letter was not delivered to me till 2 o'clock this afternoon. My adjutant has therefore been unable to proceed to your palace at the time mentioned.

If convenient to your Eminence, he will present himself tomorrow at the same hour.

I beg your Eminence to excuse this mistake and to accept the expression of my profound esteem.

(Signed) G. Von Wengersky,
Colonel and Kreischef.

This letter from the Kreischef crossed the following from the Cardinal:

Archbishop's House, Malines,
February 9th, 1915.

To the Count Wengersky, Kreischef, Malines.

Dear Count—I am afraid you did not receive my letter this morning in time to enable you to see your adjutant. I hasten therefore to inform you that I shall be delighted to receive your delegate tomorrow, Wednesday, at 4 p. m. (5h. German time). However, to prevent his taking a step which he might believe fruitless, I think it my duty to warn you that as regards the priests of my diocese shot by German troops, I refer to my letter of January 24th, last.

Accept, my dear Count, the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

On February 10th, at the appointed hour, the adjutant, Von Fleming, presented himself at the Archbishop's House and renewed the questions already put to him by the Kreischef. His Eminence answered them in writing. The following is the text of his reply signed by himself and the adjutant:

The adjutant, Von Fleming, asks me in the name of the Governor General:

(1) In what parishes priests have been shot?

(2) What troops put them to death and on what date?

(3) Is the bishop of the diocese ready to declare positively that his priests were innocent?

The names of the parishes have already been printed in my Christmas pastoral, 1914, on page 65.

The German headquarters staff is better informed than any one else as to what troops were occupying a parish on any particular day. While the population easily recognize the German uniform, they are for the most part unable to distinguish the regiments of which the army is composed.

I have good reasons for my personal conviction that the priests whose names I have cited were innocent; but in justice it is not for us to prove their innocence: it is for the military authorities who have proceeded against them to establish their guilt.

Witnesses called to give evidence before a biased commission will in general be afraid to tell the truth. This can only be obtained fully and be universally accepted as such on condition that a mixed commission be formed to investigate it and to guarantee an impartial and exact inquiry.

And, therefore, I cannot but renew for the third time my proposal to confide to a mixed commission made up partly of German magistrates and partly of Belgian magistrates the task of throwing full light on facts about which the Governor General has had the happy idea to institute an inquiry. In order that the results of the inquiry may have all desirable weight, it were well that the tribunal should be presided over by some delegate from a neutral state.

Malines, February 10th, 1915.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

(Signed) VON FLEMING,
Major and Adjutant of the Kreischef of Malines.

The proposals of the Cardinal achieved no result whatever.

CHAPTER VII

RELEASE OF THE BELGIAN DOCTORS AND CHEMISTS CONFINED AT HEIDELBERG

REFERENCE has already been made in a preceding letter to a group of Belgian army doctors and pharmaceutical chemists confined at Heidelberg and threatened by the camp commandant with reprisals, to be undertaken as a sort of protest against the supposed bad treatment to which it was falsely alleged the German officer prisoners in France and Belgium had been subjected. The Cardinal, who had interceded with Von Bissing on his compatriots' behalf, received the following reply:

Governor General, Brussels,
January 30th, 1915.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

The letter which your Eminence wrote me on December 17th, 1914,* led me to obtain precise particulars about the twenty-three doctors and twelve pharmaceutical chemists who have been deported to Heidelberg.

The result of the inquiries I have made is that the competent authorities had at first the intention of attaching them to the Belgian Medical Service quartered in Germany, but that this plan was never put into execution, in the same way as it was not found possible at the beginning to send them into Switzerland.

Under these circumstances, it was found necessary to intern them provisionally in the officers' camp at Heidelberg.

Already on January 3rd orders were sent to conduct them to Switzerland: they will have by now reached the place which they themselves chose for their residence.

* A copy of this letter has never been found.

I present to your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) BARON VON BISSING,
Governor General.

The Cardinal thanked Von Bissing for his intervention:

Archbishop's House, Malines,
February 6th, 1915.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—In reply to the letter I had the honor of addressing you on December 17th last, your Excellency has been so kind as to inform me that twenty-three doctors and twelve dispensers, prisoners at Heidelberg, have been released.

I rejoice at the result of the steps taken by your Excellency and think it my duty to express my gratitude.

Please accept, dear Governor General, the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

Among the many libels on Belgium spread broadcast by the Germans in the course of their world-wide propaganda during the War, the Kaiser's telegram to President Wilson in September, 1914, and the book bearing the title of "The German War and Catholicism. A German Reply to French Attacks, Edited by German Catholics," were unsurpassed for cynical mendacity in the one case and in utter unscrupulousness in the other.

Given to the public in 1915, the aim of this book was to remove the slur which had been cast on the German troops by their conduct in Belgium and in the North of France, where countless massacres, atrocities and wanton destruction of every kind marked their trail.

The main purport of the book was to show that the German Army was forced to the prosecution of this campaign of ruthlessness by the hostile and treacherous attitude taken up by the Belgian people—a proposition which

inevitably involved the fabrication of charges of unheard-of cruelty against the Belgians.

To effect this purpose a very simple procedure was adopted. The German Staff simply accused the Belgians of the very crimes which their own soldiers had committed, and this they did without bringing forward the slightest evidence or proof to substantiate their appalling accusations. A more cold-blooded, deliberate, collective, national lie has probably never been heard of before and what makes it the more outrageous is that the Kaiser himself and the leaders of public opinion in Germany who merely echoed his words, endorsed and disseminated these charges without making the least attempt to enquire into their truth or falsity.

Twice did Cardinal Mercier, shocked and righteously indignant at this monstrous injustice, appeal to the Occupying Power to hold an impartial inquiry, but no answer was vouchsafed. Then as a last resort he called upon the Episcopates of Germany and Austria-Hungary to at least afford Belgium an opportunity to vindicate her honor.

The following letter, drafted by Cardinal Mercier, was signed by all the Belgian Bishops with whom he could communicate at the time:

November 24th, 1915.

To their Eminences the Cardinals and their Lordships, the Bishops of Germany, Bavaria and Austria-Hungary.

Venerable Brethren—For over a year now, we Catholic Bishops, you of Germany and we of Belgium, have appeared to the world in a very uncertain light.

The German Armies had hardly set foot on our soil when a rumor was circulated in all your country that our civilians were taking an active part in military operations, that women had actually gouged out the eyes of your soldiers at Visé and Liège and that the property of Germans expelled from Antwerp had been looted by the populace.*

* NOTE—An important section of German Catholics with the ostensible view of replying to a French work entitled "The German War and Catholicism" heaped calumnies on the heads of the Belgian people and a Paderborn schoolmaster named Rosenberg, assuming the character of mouthpiece for his compatriots, grossly insulted Belgian honor in his "The Ger-

In the early days of August, Dom Ildephonsus Herwegen, Abbot of Maria-Laach, telegraphed Cardinal Mercier imploring him for the love of God to protect German soldiers against the serious ill-treatment they were alleged to be subjected to by our compatriots. Now it was well known that our Government had left no stone unturned to instruct our people in the laws of warfare. In every town, village or hamlet the inhabitants were ordered to surrender whatever firearms they had in their possession to the local authorities, and, in addition, bills were posted up informing them that those citizens alone who were properly enlisted were authorized to bear arms, and the clergy, in their eagerness to back up the State, gave publicity to the Government decrees, both by word of mouth and by issuing them in their parish magazines and affixing them to their church doors.

We, who have been accustomed to a peaceful rule during the last hundred years, were unable to realize that anyone in good faith could credit us with instincts of aggression and knowing that right was on our side and that our pacific intentions were genuine, we merely answered the calumnious accusation of gouging out eyes and waging a guerilla warfare against the Germans with a shrug of the shoulders, being convinced that sooner or later—probably sooner—the truth would itself, and of itself, eventually come to light.

The Belgian Episcopate and clergy used to enter into personal relations with numerous German and Austrian Bishops, Religious and priests, the Eucharistic Congresses held at Cologne in 1909 and Vienna in 1912 giving them abundant opportunity of getting to know each other more intimately, in this way fostering mutual esteem. Again, we were confident that we should not be judged rashly by Cath-

man War and Catholicism. A German Reply to French Attacks, Edited by German Catholics"—a book which is all the more insidious because its tone is apparently restrained.

The Cardinal and the Bishops of Namur, Liège and Tournai replied to this book, French and Flemish translations of which were distributed broadcast in Belgium, in a letter to their German and Austrian colleagues on the Episcopal Bench proposing an open enquiry into Rosenberg's allegations.

olics belonging to countries at war with us, so that without allowing the contents of Dom Ildephonsus' telegram to unduly perturb him, the Cardinal was satisfied with inviting him to unite with the Belgians in preaching the Gospel of meekness, for, added he, we hear that German soldiers are shooting down innocent Belgian priests.

Dating from the very beginning of August, outrages were perpetrated at Battice, Visé, Berneau, Herve and elsewhere, and we earnestly hoped that they would prove to be isolated instances and, with the knowledge we had that Dom Ildephonsus was an influential man, we gave credence to the following declaration he kindly made to us on August 11th:

"I have first-hand information to the effect that the military authorities issued formal orders to the German troops to spare the innocent. As to the deplorable fact that certain priests have laid down their lives may I point out to your Eminence that the ecclesiastical soutane and monastic habit have become objects of suspicion and scandal owing to French spies having recently disguised themselves as priests and monks, the better to hide their nefarious purpose."

Notwithstanding this, outrages against innocent people continued apace.

On August 18th, 1914, the Bishop of Liège wrote to Commandant Bayer, who was acting as Governor of Liège: "Many of our villages have been razed to the ground one after the other, and influential men, among them certain Rectors of parishes, shot down, others again have been placed under arrest, all, however, loudly protesting their innocence.

"I know my diocesan clergy too well to believe any one of them guilty of hostile acts against the Germans. In the course of my visits to different hospitals, I have found German wounded receiving the same careful treatment as the Belgians—a fact even your own soldiers admit." *

* Note—This protest was renewed on August 22nd, when General Kolewe became Military Governor of Liège, and again on August 29th, when it was forwarded to Baron von der Goltz, Governor General of the Occupied Provinces of Belgium, whose Headquarters were at that time in Bishop's House, Liège.

No reply was returned to this letter.

In the beginning of September the Kaiser cast the mantle of his authority over the calumnies uttered against our innocent people, when he dispatched his telegram to President Wilson, the contents of which have not been withdrawn, to the best of our knowledge, even to this day:

"The Belgian Government has publicly encouraged civilians to take part in a War, for which they have made long and careful preparations. In the course of this guerilla warfare, such cruel outrages have been committed on doctors and nurses by women and even priests that my Generals have at last been compelled to take the most stringent measures to punish the guilty and put a stop to these odious and abominable crimes committed by bloodthirsty civilians. We have been obliged to destroy several villages as also the town of Louvain, its fine Town Hall excepted, and my heart bleeds when I see that this destruction was inevitable for defensive reasons and in order to protect our armies, and again when I think of the innumerable innocent people who have lost their homes and goods and chattels as the result of the criminal acts in question."

This telegram of the Kaiser's was posted up in Belgium by order of the Governor General on September 11th, and on the following day the Bishop of Namur demanded audience of the Military Governor of that Province to protest against the stigma the Kaiser attempted to cast on the Belgian clergy. He maintained that every priest shot down or subjected to ill-treatment was innocent of the charge preferred against him and expressed himself as ready to denounce publicly of his own accord any crimes that could successfully be laid at the door of the clergy.

The Bishop of Namur's offer was not accepted nor did his protest have any tangible result. Thus a free rein was given to the libel, the German Press exerting itself to the utmost to spread it rather than stay its course.

The Catholic Centre Party paper, the "Cologne People's Gazette," in particular, rivaled the Lutheran Press in its exaggerated and unreasoning patriotism, and when

thousands of our fellow citizens, ecclesiastical as well as laymen, as guiltless of war-like acts or cruelties as you yourselves or we are, were led into captivity from Visé, Aerschot, Wesemael, Berent, Louvain and twenty other places, and passed through Aix-la-Chapelle and Cologne stations, where for several hours, which must have seemed to them an eternity, they were handed over to the inhabitants of the capital of Rhineland as objects of a morbid curiosity, our poor people were sorrow-stricken at finding their fellow Catholics as insulting and abusive as any Lutheran sectarian at Celle, Soltau or Magdeburg. Not a voice was uplifted in Germany in defence of these poor victims.

In this way, the fairy-tale, whereby innocent men were transformed into guilty ones—this flagrant violation of justice received its sanction, and on May 10th, 1915, it was cynically reiterated in the German "White Book," the official organ of the Empire, and the following offensive, cowardly, lying statement went the round of neutral countries:

"It cannot be doubted but that German wounded have been robbed and then killed in cold blood or shockingly mutilated by the Belgian people, even women and children cooperating in these outrages. German wounded have had their eyes gouged out, their eyes, noses, fingers and genital organs lopped off or have been disemboweled. Again German soldiers have been poisoned, hung from branches of trees, and have had boiling liquids poured over them and sometimes even been burnt alive, succumbing eventually under excruciating sufferings. This inhuman conduct of the Belgians not only violates the explicit provisions of the Geneva Convention as to the consideration to be shown and treatment to be meted out to enemy wounded, but also contravenes the fundamental principles and laws of Humanity." *

Venerable Brethren in the Faith and priesthood, put yourselves for a moment in our place.

We know that these accusations of the Imperial Gov-

* NOTE—*Die Völkerrechtswidrige Führung des Belgischen Volkskriegs. Denkschrift,* S. 4.

ernment are false from beginning to end, yea, not only do we know it, we even swear they are.

Now, your Government, in order to justify itself, calls on witnesses who have never been subjected to the test of cross-examination before any inquiry. Is it not your duty, not merely in charity but in strict justice, to seek enlightenment and bring the truth home to your flocks?—to give us an opportunity to prove our innocence by legal methods?

In the name of Christian charity, whereby national conflicts are ruled, you should make this act of reparation, and you owe it to us today in strict justice, because a Committee, composed of Germans of eminence in Science, Politics or Religion enjoying at least your tacit approval, took these official libels under its wing and entrusted a Catholic priest and Professor of Paderborn, Herr A. T. Rosenberg, with the task of tabulating them in his book, "The False Accusations of French Catholics against Germany," thereby making Catholic Germany responsible for actively and publicly spreading these calumnies broadcast to the detriment of the fair name of Belgium.

When the French book, against which the German Catholics brought out their own, made its first appearance, their Eminences Cardinal von Hartmann, Archbishop of Cologne, and Cardinal von Bettinger, Archbishop of Munich, felt themselves called upon to send the Kaiser a telegram couched in these terms:

"Disgusted with the falsehoods uttered against the Fatherland and its glorious Army in the 'German War and Catholicism,' we feel we must, in the name of the German Episcopate, express to your Majesty our sorrowful indignation. We shall not fail to lay our complaint at the feet of the Sovereign Pontiff."

We, too, Venerable Brethren of the German Episcopate, are disgusted in our turn with the falsehoods uttered against our beloved country and its glorious Army in the German "White Book" and reiterated by the German Catholics in their reply to this French Catholic work, and in order that our protest may not prove ineffective in the face of

yours, we request you to lend us your aid in setting up a commission of inquiry where these charges can be sifted and disproved. You may, in virtue of your official position, nominate as many members as you please, and we will appoint an equal number ourselves, for example, three on each side. Then together we will approach the Bishops of some neutral country, either Holland, Spain, Switzerland or the United States, and ask them to appoint one of their number to act as referee and preside over the business of the Inquiry.

You have laid your complaints before the supreme head of the Church: it would be unjust if he were to hear no other voice but yours. Both Episcopates have an identical duty, which is to lay before his Holiness duly authenticated documents to enable him to form and give a considered judgment. You can hardly be unaware of our repeated attempts to induce the Occupying Power in Belgium to set up this Commission of Inquiry. Cardinal Mercier applied in writing on two different occasions, the one on January 24th, 1915, the other on February 10th of the same year, and the Bishop of Namur in his letter to the Military Governor of that Province under date of April 12th, 1915, called for the formation of a tribunal consisting of Belgian and German members in equal numbers under the presidency of a delegate from a neutral country, but these pressing appeals met with nothing but an obstinate refusal. All the same the German authorities were very anxious to set up some kind of tribunal, but they insisted on its being one-sided and consequently of no value from a judicial point of view.

After refusing Cardinal Mercier's request, they paid a visit to the different localities where priests had been shot down and peaceable citizens massacred or imprisoned and there on the testimony of certain witnesses whom they called before them haphazard or chose with careful discrimination, in some cases in the presence of a representative of the local authorities who had no knowledge of German, and consequently had no alternative but to accept and append his signature to a document, the contents of which he could only

take on trust, they considered themselves able to base conclusions to be afterwards given to the world as the findings of an impartial Commission.

This was the method adopted at the German inquiry at Louvain in 1914, which was in consequence devoid of all authority, and so we naturally turn to you. You will be good enough to grant us the tribunal refused to us by the Occupying Power and we trust you will obtain for us from your Government a public declaration enabling your witnesses and ours to appear and give full and complete evidence without any fear of reprisals. They will have a greater sense of security in your presence and will receive every encouragement to testify to what they have seen and heard. The world, too, will have every confidence in the united Episcopate of the two countries. Our joint examination of whatever evidence may be laid before us will give it the stamp of authority and effectively guarantee the trustworthiness of the official reports of the tribunal. An inquiry conducted on these lines will enable us to establish the real truth, and we ask for it, Venerable Brethren, in order to vindicate the honor of the Belgian people and remove the slur certain sections of your countrymen, including the more important among your leading men, have cast upon the fair name of Belgium. And you are as well acquainted as ourselves with an axiom of Moral, Human, Christian and Catholic Theology: "No pardon without restitution." *Non remittitur peccatum, nisi restituatur ablatum.* Your people, speaking through the mouthpiece of their highest political and moral authorities, have accused our citizens of perpetrating atrocities and horrors on German wounded, as set forth in detail in the above quotation from the "White Book" and the German Catholics' manifesto. These charges we formally deny and all we ask for is to be allowed to furnish proof positive that our disavowal of them is well founded.

On the other hand, to justify the atrocities committed by German troops in Belgium, your Government, as shown by the very title of the "White Book": *Die Völkerrechtswidrige Führung des Belgischen Volkskriegs* (The violation

of International Law in the Belgian method of warfare), and the hundred Catholic signatories to "The German War and Catholicism. A German Reply to French Attacks," both maintain that the German Army in Belgium is acting on the defensive against a treacherous organization of francs-tireurs. We on the contrary affirm that no such organization has ever existed anywhere in Belgium and in the name of our national honor defamed by these libels, we claim the right to prove absolute truth of this assertion.

You may summon whom you like before this commission of inquiry, indeed we invite you to order the appearance of the Rector of any Parish where civilians, priests, religious or laymen have been massacred or threatened with death to the cry of, *"man hat geschossen"* (somebody has fired). We will, if you wish, give all these, the priests, the option of signing their statements on oath, and at the price of holding up the whole Belgian clergy to obloquy as perjurous, you will have to accept the findings of this solemn and decisive inquiry in common with the rest of the civilized world. We would add, Veneral Brethren, that the setting up of this Court of Honor is as vital to your interests as it is to ours, for we know by personal experience and affirm that in a hundred different places in Belgium the German Army has given itself up to pillage, arson, massacres, imprisonings and sacrileges in direct violation of all the laws of justice and humanity, notably in those communes mentioned by name in our Pastor Letters and in two notes sent by the Bishops of Liège and Namur on October 31st and November 1st, 1915, respectively, to his Holiness, Pope Benedict XV, the Papal Nuncio at Brussels and the Ambassadors and representatives of neutral countries accredited to the Court of Brussels and resident in that city.

Fifty priests and thousands of the Faithful, all of them absolutely innocent of the crimes for which they paid the extreme penalty, were executed, whilst hundreds of others who owed their lives to a chain of circumstances beyond the control of their persecutors were in imminent peril. Some thousands of guiltless citizens were arrested and sent to prison without previous trial or conviction, and on their

release it was found that the most minute cross-examination had failed to elicit any evidence against them.

These outrages cry to Heaven for vengeance.

If, in laying this information against the German Army, we have been guilty of calumny, or in case the military authorities had good and just reasons for ordering or permitting what we cannot but style criminal conduct, the Germans will, if they retain any sense of national honor, or have the true interest of their country at heart, refute us. But so long as German justice shirks the ordeal, we shall hold fast to our rights and fulfill our duty of denouncing what we conscientiously consider to be a grave perversion of justice and a slur on our national honor.

During the session of the Reichstag on August 4th the Chancellor of the German Empire declared that the invasion of Luxemburg and Belgium was *"contrary to the provisions of International Law."* He admitted that "in crossing the frontiers in spite of the justifiable protests of the Luxemburg and Belgian Governments, he had committed an *injustice* for which he promised reparation," and the Sovereign Pontiff, too, not only purposely alluded to Belgium in a letter he deigned to write to a member of the Government, M. Van den Heuvel, through his Secretary of State, Cardinal Gasparri, but also delivered this unalterable judgment in his consistorial address: "The duty of proclaiming above everything else that *no one may, for any reason whatsoever, commit a breach of justice* devolves on the Roman Pontiff, who has been constituted by Almighty God the supreme interpreter and upholder of the Eternal Law."

Nevertheless, from that time onwards politicians and casuists have attempted to evade or water down these decisive words of the Holy Father, and the German Catholics, who in their reply to the French "German War and Catholicism" have recourse to the same empty quibbles, would, if they could, bolster them up with an alleged fact.

They have at their disposal two affidavits. One of these is anonymous and its author alleges that he saw French officers in conversation with Belgian officers on the Boulevard Anspach at Brussels on July 26th, whilst in the sec-

ond, made by a certain Gustave Lochard of Rimogne, it is alleged that two regiments of French Dragoons, the 28th and 30th, and a battery of French Artillery crossed the Belgian frontier in the evening of July 31st, 1914, and were quartered exclusively on Belgian territory during the whole of the following week.

Now the Belgian Government declares that "no body of French troops, however small, penetrated into Belgium before the declaration of war," and adds: "No reliable witness can be found to refute this solemn assertion." Therefore it casts back in their teeth as false the allegation made by the German Catholics and from this arises a primary question, at once political and moral, about which we must enlighten the public mind. In case, however, you decline to undertake the investigation of this question we would ask you to be good enough to sift all the evidence the German Catholics have relied on, even if it only serves to settle the case against us. Gustave Lochard's evidence can easily be verified. Besides, the German Catholics will be anxious to rid themselves of the stigma of untruthfulness and will make it their bounden duty to retract in case they have allowed themselves to be misled to our detriment.

We are well aware that you decline to believe that regiments whose discipline, honesty and deep religious faith you profess to know so well could possibly give themselves over to such atrocities as we allege against them. Do you wish to deceive yourselves into believing that they did not do so because they are incapable of it? And we, on our side, are compelled to retort that the evidence in our possession proves to demonstration that they are capable for the simple reason that they have committed them. No presumption can hold its own against a fact, and there remains but one issue before us both, viz., the verifying of this fact by a commission whose impartiality is so obvious as to be recognized by everybody as unquestionable.

We have no difficulty in understanding your frame of mind. We, too, have a great regard, if you will be good enough to believe it, for the spirit of discipline, industry and religious faith by which your compatriots are animated. We

have often seen this with our own eyes, and have reliable information to the same effect, but, alas, there are many Belgians today who, in the light of the terrible experiences through which they passed during the months of August and September, own that they have been bitterly deceived. Truth has conquered their strongest preconceived notions of the Germans. The fact is now beyond the shadow of doubt. Belgium has suffered martyrdom.

When foreigners from neutral countries, Americans, Dutch, Swiss, and Spaniards, ask us how Germany carried on this war, and we picture to them certain scenes, the horror of which were so realistically brought home to us in spite of ourselves, we have had to weaken the impression our recital would of itself tend to create, so imbued are we with the idea that the truth, shorn of all adornment, exceeds the bounds of all probability. Yet when once you have been face to face with realities in their entirety and have been able to analyze both the proximate and remote causes of what one of your generals, reviewing the ruins of the little village of Schaffen-lez-Diest and the martyrdom of its Parish Priest, styled "a tragic blunder," when you have realized the various influences under which your soldiers labored at the moment of their entry into Belgium and the elation they experienced as the result of their early victories, the unlikelihood of the truth will appear to you, as it did to us, less disconcerting.

But above all, Venerable Brethren, do not let yourselves be held back on the empty plea that an immediate inquiry would be premature. Strictly speaking, we alone might be justified in urging this excuse, since if the inquiry were opened now, the conditions surrounding it would not be at all in our favor. Our people have indeed been terrorized to such an extent and the prospect of reprisals is still so appalling that the witnesses we should have to summon before a tribunal composed partly of Germans would hardly have enough courage to tell the whole truth. Even so, we have cogent reasons for not brooking any delay. The first which will go the straightest to your heart is that we are weak whilst you are strong. You would not care to take

an unfair advantage of us by abusing your power. Public opinion generally favors him who is first in the field with his story. Now, whilst you are free to flood neutral countries with your propaganda literature, we, on the contrary, are hedged in on all sides and reduced to silence. We are scarcely allowed to make our voices heard even inside our own churches. Sermons are practically censored, that is to say, they are distorted by spies in your pay, and any protest we may make in conscience is termed an act of sedition against public authority. Again our writings are stopped at the frontier and treated as so much contraband. You alone enjoy full liberty of speech and pen, and if in the spirit of charity and fair play you obtain a small portion of this for accused Belgians, thereby enabling them to defend their cause, it will then be your duty to become their immediate protectors.

The old legal axiom, *Audiatur et altera pars,* is, they say, inscribed over the portals of many German Courts of Justice. In any case, in all proceedings in the Ecclesiastical Courts, both here and in Germany, judgment is always founded on this primary adage. Then again you doubtless have in common with us a popular proverb, metaphorically expressed thus: "He who hears only one bell hears but one sound."

You will perhaps say that all this is ancient history. Let the dead bury its dead. Instead of fanning the smoldering embers into a blaze, rather be forgiving and make common cause with the occupying power in their efforts to heal the wounds the unfortunate Belgian people have received. Venerable Brethren, do not add irony to injustice. Have we not suffered enough? Have we not been on the rack long enough yet? Must we still be subjected to cruel tortures? All that is now over, we hear you saying. Accept it with resignation and forget. Past! Why, our wounds are still bleeding! There is no man with any sense of honor who does not swell with indignation. When we hear our Government declaim in the teeth of the whole world: "He is doubly guilty who, having infringed the rights of another, attempts with cold cynicism to justify himself by imputing

to his victim crimes he has never committed," violence alone silences the curses that rise to the lips of our people. Only yesterday one of the inhabitants of a Mechlin suburb learned that his son had fallen on the field of battle and the brave father answered the priest who conveyed the sad news to him and offered words of consolation and comfort, "Oh, that one. I gave him freely to his Fatherland, but my eldest son, those ——— cruelly murdered him and flung his body into a ditch."

Tell us, how could we possibly elicit a sincere expression of forgiveness and resignation from an unhappy people who have experienced such anguish so long as those who have brought this suffering into their lives refuse to utter one word in acknowledgment of their wrongdoing, one word of repentance or one word promising reparation?

Germany cannot give us back the blood she has shed or the innocent lives her Army has destroyed, but it is in her power to restore the good name of Belgium on which she has herself cast a slur or allowed others to do so, and in your capacity of foremost representatives of Christian morality in the German Church we demand this restitution of you.

There is indeed something much more deplorable than mere political divisions or material calamities, viz., the spirit of hatred, fostered by real or presumed injustice, seething and growing in intensity the while in hearts made rather for love. Is it not our duty as Pastors of our people to make it easier for them to unburden their souls of these evil emotions, and strengthen the now shaken foundations of true justice and union in charity which should reign uppermost in the hearts of all children of the great Catholic family?

The Occupying Power has, both verbally and in writing, expressed its intention to heal our wounds. But *in foro externo,* intention is judged by action. Now the only thing we poor Belgians, temporarily under the heel of the German Empire, know is that a power which gave its word of honor to govern us according to International Law as laid down in the Hague Convention, has repudiated its solemn engagement. What we have in mind now is not so much isolated abuses of power from which certain individuals or districts

have suffered. These can only be proved by a thorough investigation to be made when War is over, but rather those specific acts of the Government which were drawn up in the form of proclamations and notices and posted up by its order on walls and hoardings in our towns. Their authenticity and consequently your Government's direct responsibility for them cannot therefore be called into question.

Now the breaches of the Hague Convention committed by the Germans from the first days of the occupation until the present time are many and flagrant. We merely give you here certain headings as it were and would refer you to an appendix for proofs of our allegations.*

The principal infringements are as follows:—

Collective punishments inflicted on account of the misdemeanors of individuals contrary to Art. 52.

Forced labor contrary to Art. 52.

New taxation contrary to Arts. 48, 49, and 52.

Abuse of requisitions in kind contrary to Art. 52.

Systematic ignoring of the laws in force in the country contrary to Art. 43.

These violations of International Law which serve only to aggravate our unhappy lot and swell the leaven of hatred and revolt in hearts normally peaceable and charitable, would never be persisted in if those who commit them did not feel they were upheld, if not by the positive approval of the leaders of public opinion in their own country, at all events by their tacit consent. Therefore with every confidence that it will reach your charitable hearts, we again make our appeal. We are, as we said once before, the weak, while you are the strong. Come and see for yourselves if it is still right for you to withhold your assistance.

Besides the particular reasons why this commission of enquiry, composed of Catholic Bishops, should be set up, there are others of a more general nature, passing reference to which we have already made. Amongst these is the danger of scandal for those people who own that they are not edified at seeing us divided among ourselves. We must then be on our guard against provoking them to blasphemy

* Note—See p. 90 of the text.

in thought. Our own people fail to understand how you can possibly be blind to the flagrant dual injustice inflicted on Belgium—the violation of our neutrality and the inhuman conduct of your troops, and, moreover, why in the light of this knowledge you do not make your voices heard on all sides in condemnation of these wrongs, and repudiate your connection with them.

On the other hand, your own countrymen, Catholics and Protestants alike, cannot but be scandalized at the character your press attributes to both clergy and people belonging to a country the Government of which has been Catholic for thirty years. On September 21st, 1914, the Bishop of Hildesheim, addressing his clergy, said: "Take care that the airing of these grievances against priests, religious, monks of Catholic nations in the columns of the press does not drive a wedge between German Catholics and Protestants and imperil the future of Religion in the Empire."

But the campaign of falsehood and calumny directed against our clergy and people shows no sign of abating. On the contrary, Herr Erzberger, a member of the Centre, appears to have taken it upon himself to add fuel to the flame, while even in Belgium itself one of your priests, Heinrich Mohr by name, preaching to the German troops in Antwerp Cathedral on the 16th Sunday after Pentecost, actually dared to say from the pulpit: "Official documents tell us how the Belgians have hanged German soldiers from trees, poured boiling liquids over them and burnt them alive." *

There is only one way of putting an end to these scandals and that is for the religious authorities to bring the whole truth to light and publicly and officially denounce the guilty parties.

Another cause of scandal for any straightforward man, whether he be a believer or not, lies in this mania for bringing to the fore and weighing in the balance the advantages

* NOTE—Man hat in den Amtlichten Berichten entsetzliche Dinge gelesen. Wie die Belgier deutsche Soldaten an die Baumen aufhängten, mit heizem-Teer verbrünten und lebendig anzundeten. Feldpredigt auf den 16 sontag nach Pfingstern, von Heinrich Mohr. The sermon was published in Die Stimmen der Heimat No. 34, a periodical issued by Herder in 1915 from Freiburg in Br.

or disadvantages that would accrue to the Catholic religion according as the Triple Alliance or the Quadruple Entente were victorious.

Professor Schrörs of Bonn University * was the first, so far as we are aware, to devote his leisure hours to this vexatious species of Mathematics.

The result the War will have on Religion is God's own secret and not one of us is in his confidence.

But there is a question of moral right and honor far more important than that one: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his justice," said our Saviour, "and all the rest will be added unto you." Do your duty, come what may. We Bishops also have a moral and, consequently, a religious duty to perform at the present time—one that claims precedence over all the rest, viz., to seek out and proclaim the truth. Did not Jesus Christ, who has conferred on us the signal favor of being at once his disciples and ministers, say that *His mission to society was to witness to the truth? "For this I came into the world that I should give testimony to the truth."* (John 18, v. 37.)

On the solemn occasion of our episcopal consecration, we all vowed to Almighty God and the Catholic Church never to desert the Truth, never to allow ourselves to be led away by ambition or fear whenever we should be called upon to supply some proof of our love for the truth, *"Veritatem diligat, neque eam unquam deserat, aut laudibus aut timore superatus."*

We have, therefore, by virtue of our very vocation, a common rôle and ground on which to base an understanding. Confusion reigns in every mind; light for some is darkness for others and so it is with good and evil. We cherish the hope that the commission of Inquiry to be formed with a view to setting aside these charges, to which we have the honor to convene your delegates, will contribute towards removing more than one misconception, *"Non ponat lucem*

* Note—Der Krieg und der Katholizimus, von Dr. Heinrich Schrörs, Prof. d. Teologie an der Universitat in Bonn.

tenebras, nec tenebras lucem, non dicat malum bonum, nec bonum malum." *

Our Holy Father the Pope ardently expressed his desire for peace and appealed for its conclusion in a letter he deigned to send you during your last meeting at Fulda. He urged you, as he does us all, to unite with him in this desire, but he would have peace based on respect for the rights and dignity of nations. *"Dum votis omnibus pacem expetimus, atque eam quidem pacem quæ et justitiæ sit opus et populorum congruat dignitati."* †

Our most fitting answer, therefore, to the Holy Father's wish is to collaborate with you in making the Truth shine forth in all its splendor and triumph over error, since upon it rest justice, honor and lastly, peace.

Receive, Venerable Brethren, the expression of our sincere esteem and fraternal devotion.

APPENDIX

BREACHES OF THE HAGUE CONVENTION

Germany was one of the signatories to the Hague Convention.

As early as November 12th, 1914, the Governor General, Baron von der Goltz, referred to the Hague Convention in a notice issued by him.

His successor, Baron von Bissing, issued a proclamation on July 18th, 1915, affirming that his intention was *"to govern Belgium in accordance with the provisions of the Hague Convention as to the laws and customs of land warfare,"* and added:

"His Majesty the Emperor of Germany, after the Occupation of the Kingdom of Belgium by our victorious troops, entrusted me with the administration of this country and commissioned me to carry out the obligations arising out of the Hague Convention."

So much for the law. Now for the facts.

* NOTE—*Pontificale Romanum. de consecratione electi in episcopum.*
† NOTE—Acta Apostolicæ Sedis. Vol. 7, die 6 Octobris, 1915.

I. Collective Penalties

Art. 40 of the Convention provides that "No pecuniary or other collective penalty may be inflicted on the populations on account of the actions of individuals, for which the community could not be held to be collectively responsible."

Now the history of the occupation is divided into three periods: the invasion itself, the period of Baron von der Goltz's administration and that of Baron von Bissing's.

During the first of these three collective penalties of every kind were systematically inflicted and there are abundant proofs for this assertion. The following alone is sufficient:—

In proportion as the invading army made headway, the Commander-in-Chief had a proclamation posted up printed in three languages on red paper, wherein it was laid down that:

"Any village in which hostile acts are committed against our troops by the inhabitants will be *burned down.*

"In cases where roads, railways or bridges are destroyed, the villages *nearest to the points where destruction has taken place* will be held *responsible.*

"The above-mentioned penalties will be carried out with severity and no favor will be shown. *The whole body will be held responsible.* Heavy war levies will be inflicted, and hostages seized in large numbers."

During the Governorship of Marshal von der Goltz a proclamation affecting the whole of the occupied territory was issued over his signature on September 2d, 1914. It expressly lays down that, "One of the inevitable hardships of war is that the *innocent* as well as the guilty have to suffer punishment for hostile acts."

Consequently collective punishment was unsparingly resorted to.

Thus to take a typical example: The city of Brussels was mulcted in a fine of 5,000,000 marks because a policeman, without the knowledge of the local authorities, treated an official of the German administration disrespectfully.

A notice signed "Baron von der Goltz," posted up on October 7th, 1914, applied collective penalties to the whole family. It ran:—

"The Belgian Government has issued calling-up notices to several military groups. All those receiving such notices are strictly forbidden to obey them. *In cases of infringement, the soldier's family will be held equally responsible.*"

With Baron von Bissing as Governor General, that is to say, beginning with October 3rd, 1914, *collective* punishment was constantly inflicted contrary to Art. 50.

The following are a few typical instances:—

On December 23rd, 1914, it was stated in a notice placarded all over Brussels that in the event of soldiers' graves being tampered with or desecrated, not only the perpetrators of such desecration will be punished, but responsibility will also fall *on the whole commune.*

A decree of the Governor General under date January 26th *makes an entire family responsible* for the fact that a Belgian of military age, that is, between 16 and 40, crossed over into Holland. In fact, the communes are mulcted in huge fines on the flimsiest pretexts. Thus Puers must pay 3,000 mks. because a telegraph wire was broken, although it was proved in the course of a subsequent enquiry that it was simply worn out.

Mechlin, a working-class town without funds, was fined 20,000 mks. because the mayor did not advise the military authorities of a journey the Cardinal was obliged to make on foot, owing to his having been deprived of the use of his Motor-car.

II. Forced Labor for the Enemy

According to the terms of Art. 52 of the Hague Convention, "*Requisitions* in kind and *personal service* can only be exacted from communes or the inhabitants thereof on three conditions:—

"1. Provided that they do not involve any obligation on the part of the population to participate in warlike operations against their country.

"2. Provided that they be in proportion to the resources of the country or people on whom they are imposed.

"3. Provided that they be limited to the needs of the Army of Occupation."

It is interesting to notice that Art. 23 contains a concluding paragraph proposed by the German delegates to the 2nd Hague Conference held in 1907 as follows:

"No belligerent is allowed to compel enemy nationals to take part in military operations against their country."

1. From the moment of the invasion Belgian civilian citizens were forced to take part in warlike operations and this in twenty different places.

At Lebbeke, Termonde, Dinant and in many other towns, *peaceable citizens, women and children were compelled to march at the head of German regiments or to form a screen around them.*

At Liège and Namur civilians were forced to dig trenches and were also employed in the work of repairing fortifications.

The frenzied seizure of hostages proceeded with vigor.

The proclamation of August 4th, already referred to, declared without a quibble "Hostages will be seized in large numbers."

An official proclamation placarded all over Liège in the early days of August read as follows:—

"Acts of aggression committed on German troops by others than soldiers in uniform not only expose the guilty parties to summary execution *but will entail the severest reprisals on all the inhabitants, especially on the citizens of Liège seized as hostages and lodged in the citadel* by order of the Commander of the German Army."

These hostages were Mgr. Rutten, Bishop of Liège, M. Kleyer the Mayor, and the senators and representatives, the permanent deputy and the Sheriff of Liège.

2. *Under the Government of Marshal von der Goltz,* every kind of requisition of services exacted during the month of August continued to be enforced. Trenches were dug, men were engaged on fortifications, roads, railways and in transport work.

The Governor General promulgated the following decree on November 19th:

"Whosoever by constraint, threats, *persuasion* or other means shall attempt to hinder the execution of work for the German authorities by persons capable of performing the task required of them or contractors entrusted with such work by the Germans will render themselves liable to imprisonment."

The decree does not specify for what term—a case of unrestrained despotism. The system of taking hostages was continued in all its rigor.

A monstrous specimen of high-handedness and cruelty is the proclamation issued on September 8th, 1914, by Major Commandant Dieckman in the communes of Baine-Heusay, Grivignée and Bois-de-Breux of which the following is an extract:

"From September 7th onwards I am willing to allow the inhabitants of the above mentioned communes to return to their homes. To obviate any abuse of this permission, the mayors of Baine-Heusay and Grivignée must immediately draw up a list of those who will be kept back and held as hostages in Fort Fleron.

"The lives of these hostages depend on the inhabitants of the said communes keeping the peace in all circumstances.

"I shall specify the individuals who are to be held as hostages from noon on one day until noon on the next. If a hostage detained in the fort is not changed at the proper time, he shall remain there for a further space of 24 hours. When this new period of 24 hours has expired, the hostage will incur the penalty of death *if no change has been made.*

"Priests, mayors and other municipal officials are to head the lists of hostages."

3. *Under the Government of Baron von Bissing,* there were some flagrant violations of Art. 52 and revolting incidents occurred at the Mechlin Railway Works, at Luttre and also in several communes in West Flanders. We leave you to judge for yourselves.

The German authorities issued an order on March 23rd for the resumption of work at Luttre and on April 21st they

called for 200 workmen. On April 27th they made domiciliary visits with a view to pressing the workmen into service and conducted those they found at home to the works. Each time a man was discovered to be absent, they arrested a member of his family.

However, the men remained firm in their refusal to work "because they were unwilling to coöperate in acts of war against their country."

On April 30th the workmen thus pressed into service were not released any more, but were shut up in railway carriages.

On May 24th 24 workmen detained in prison at Nivelles were tried before a Council of War at Mons "on a charge of being members of a secret society, the end of which was to frustrate the execution of German military measures." They were sent to prison.

On May 14th 45 workmen were deported into Germany.

On May 18th a new proclamation announced that the prisoners' diet would consist of dry bread and water, with only one hot meal every four days.

On May 22nd 3 trucks containing 104 workmen were dispatched to Charleroy.

In spite of all this, the national spirit of the workmen rose in proportion as pressure was brought to bear upon them.

The same state of affairs prevailed in Mechlin where by resorting to different methods of intimidation the German authorities tried to force men to work on railway material as though it were not perfectly clear that sooner or later it would become war material.

On May 30th, 1915, the Governor General announced that he would have no alternative but to punish the town of Mechlin and suburbs by bringing all commercial traffic to a standstill unless 500 artisans signed on for work at the Arsenal by 10 a. m. on Wednesday, June 2nd. Not a single workman put in an appearance, with the result that vehicular traffic within a radius of several miles of the town was completely stopped. It was at this period that Cardinal

Mercier went on foot from Mechlin to Eppeghem—a walk which brought in its wake a fine of 20,000 mks. for the town.

Several workmen were forcibly seized and detained in the shops for two or three days.

Traffic was suspended for ten days. In June the commune of Sweveghem in West Flanders was punished because 350 workmen engaged in a private factory belonging to a certain M. Bekaert refused to make barbed wire for the German Army.

The following order was posted up in Menin in July and August, 1915:—

"From to-day onwards no more relief of any kind whatever can be afforded by the town even to families, women and children, except to those men who do *regular military work* and perform other tasks imposed upon them. All other workmen and their families will henceforth be unable to receive any kind of relief."

Is this not disgraceful enough?

Similar treatment was meted out to Harlebeke-lez-Courtrai, Bissighem, Lokeren and Mons. At Harlebeke 29 inhabitants were deported to Germany, while at Mons managers, foremen and 81 hands employed in M. Lenoir's factory were sent to prison for refusing to work for the German Army. M. Lenoir himself was sentenced to five years, 5 managers to one year, 6 foremen to 6 months, and 81 hands to eight weeks' imprisonment.

The Governor General also availed himself of a roundabout means of constraint. He laid hands on the Belgian Red Cross Society, confiscated its supplies and arbitrarily diverted it from its original purpose. He tried to assume the mastery over the Bienfaisance publique and exercise control over the National Committee for Relief and Food Supply.

If we were to give in full the Governor General's decree dated August 15th, 1915, *"as to the measures to be adopted to guarantee the execution of work* in the public interest," as well as that of August 15th, *"as to unemployed, who, out of laziness, keep away from work,"* anyone would at once perceive the indirect methods the occupying power

used to get both masters and men under their thumb simultaneously.

But it was in the War Areas (Etapes) that this contempt for the Hague Convention reached its zenith.

On October 12th, 1915, an order was published in the "Official Gazette" of Decrees applicable to War Areas, the most illuminating passages of which are these:—

Art. 1. Whosoever when ordered to do so by the military commanders refuses without good reason to undertake or continue work adapted to his calling and in the execution of which the *military authorities are interested* will be liable to correctional imprisonment for one year or more. He is also liable to be deported into Germany.

In no case may an appeal to contrary Belgian laws or even International Conventions be made in justification of a refusal to work.

The right of deciding as to the lawfulness of work belongs *exclusively* to the *military commander.*

Art. 2. Whosoever, by coercion, threats, *persuasion* or other means, induces anyone to refuse work as provided for in Art. 1 renders himself liable to imprisonment for a term of five years or more.

Art. 3. Whosoever knowingly encourages this punishable refusal to work by *granting relief* or *by any other means* is liable to a fine which may amount to 10,000 marks. He may likewise be condemned to one year's imprisonment.

In cases where communes or societies are found guilty of such crimes, the penalty will be inflicted on the heads thereof.

Art. 4. Apart from the penalties laid down in Arts. 1 and 3 the German authorities may, where needful, exact a contribution or adopt other coercive police measures in Communes where the carrying out of work has been refused without adequate reasons.

This present decree will come into force at once.

(Signed) VON HUGER,
Lieutenant General.
Inspector of Military Areas.

Ghent, October 12th, 1915.

The injustice and highhandedness of this decree are beyond imagination. Forced labor, collective punishment, indefinite penalties—everything is there. It is slavery, neither more nor less.

III. New Taxes

We will limit ourselves to detailing in a few words two instances of taxation contrary to Arts. 48, 49, 51, and 52 of the Hague Convention.

The first was ordered by Baron von Bissing in a decree dated January 16th, 1915, and consisted in penalizing Belgians who had taken refuge in foreign countries, by imposing a huge additional tax at the rate of ten times the amount of their personal contribution. This tax does not find a place in any existing category, and affected solely a class of citizens who made lawful use of their right to quit the country before it was occupied. It is therefore contrary to Arts. 48 and 51 of the Convention.

The second infringement of the Convention is the well-known contribution of 480,000,000 marks levied on the nine Provinces on December 18th, 1914.

An essential condition for the lawfulness of this kind of contribution, according to the Hague Convention, is that it be *apportioned according to the resources of the country* (Art. 52). But Belgium was devastated in 1914—contributions for war purposes were levied on towns, innumerable requisitions in kind drained the resources of the country, workshops and factories were for the most part closed down, whilst in the case of the few where work still continued, the Germans did not fail to commandeer raw materials contrary to all law. And on this poverty-stricken Belgium, dependent as it was on outside charity, they levied a contribution of nearly 500,000,000 marks.

A decree of December 10th, 1914, reads:—

"A monthly war contribution of 40,000,000 francs payable *during the space of one year* is hereby levied on the Belgian people."

We have at length reached the end of that year and

now, at the time of writing, the occupying power intends to replace "the space of one year" by "for the duration of the War."

Poor little Belgium! What has she done to rich and powerful Germany, her neighbor, to be thus trodden under foot, calumniated and oppressed?

If we had to compile a complete list of decrees and acts, in which the occupying power has to our knowledge placed itself in open contradiction with the Hague Convention, we should have to add "the *abuse of requisitions* in kind" against Art. 52, the *seizure of funds* belonging to private societies, the commandeering of some hundreds of miles of steel rails and of weapons stored in communal houses by order of the Belgian Government contrary to Art. 53, the *disregard* for the *laws of the country,* especially of the *penal code,* contrary to Art. 43. But we cannot say everything here nor bring everything forward. Should, however, those to whom our correspondence is directed wish for proofs of the allegations we have merely indicated in this final paragraph, we shall be only too glad to supply them. Neither in our letter nor in these four appendices have we made one charge which we cannot substantiate from documents in our possession.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CARDINAL'S PROTEST AGAINST THE BEHAVIOR OF A GERMAN MILITARY CHAPLAIN

Archbishop's House, Malines,
February 9th, 1915.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Dear Governor General—An incident has taken place at Forrières, in the province of Luxemburg, to which I would call your kind attention. In conjunction with my venerable colleague, Mgr. Heylen, Bishop of Namur, I should like, in addressing your Excellency, to forestall any painful controversy.

At Forrières on Thursday, January 7th, the Cure Tagnon had a conversation in the sacristy with the chaplain of Arlon which can be more or less summed up in these terms:

"Many innocent priests in the diocese of Namur have been shot."

"Pardon me," answered the chaplain, "our staff headquarters is in possession of proofs that many civilians were francs-tireurs and that the clergy incited them to fire on the German troops."

"You must not believe all these tales; if one were to pin one's faith to all one hears, I should also believe that the Germans have attempted to violate our nuns."

That very same day the chaplain, in company with a German doctor, paid a visit to the presbytery in order to induce the cure to repeat the statement he had made that morning in the sacristy.

The cure acknowledged that, materially, he had made the statement, but in a vague manner: "people say," "there

is a rumor that" and conditionally, "Germans may have violated our nuns."

Nevertheless, the chaplain made a categorical and detailed accusation against the cure, the net result of which was the imprisonment of the cure and his condemnation to either a hundred days in gaol or a thousand francs fine.

M. Misson, a public notary, accused of having in the course of familiar conversation with his friend, M. Tagnon, made the same statement, was condemned to undergo the same penalty.

I am convinced, dear Governor General, that the Cure Tagnon has not made the damning accusation against the German army which the chaplain has put into his mouth. But it is not my intention to lay stress on the accusation itself.

It is the behavior of the chaplain that I find odious. A conversation held in the afternoon by two brother priests cannot be the subject for a summons to court. The aforethought behavior of the accuser who tries to impose on the good faith of his brother priest, airily accepts a cigar which he smokes in his company, enjoys the hospitality of his table, in order to extort from him a confidence with which to trump up a case against him—this premeditation aggravates the guilt of the accuser and the odious character of his accusation.

The military tribunal of Arlon must have been badly informed of the case to have accepted such an accusation and not to have proceeded against the accuser, rather than the acused.

We, Mgr. the Bishop of Namur and myself, deem that our respect for the dignity of the priesthood and our solicitude for the maintenance of good fellowship, which ought to reign among priests to whatsoever nationality they belong, will not allow us to let pass without censure the ungentlemanly behavior of the Rector of the Dominican Priory at Dusseldorf. We are minded therefore to refer the case to the Reverend Father General of the Dominican Order and to the Holy See at Rome.

Nevertheless, if the chaplain will consent to withdraw

his accusation and if your Excellency will condescend to remit the penalty inflicted on the Cure Tagnon and on his parishioner, M. Misson, we shall be pleased to consider the incident as closed.

Kindly receive, Governor General, the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

I join with His Eminence in begging the Governor to take in hand the cause of my diocesans.

(Signed) Th. Louis Heylen,
Bishop of Namur.

Following this intervention, the punishment inflicted on the cure Tagnon and on M. Misson was reduced by one-half.

CHAPTER IX

THE CARDINAL INTERCEDES ON BEHALF OF F. VAN BAMBEKE, S. J., AND OF THE ABBE CUYLITS. VON BISSING COMPLAINS OF THE PATRIOTIC ATTITUDE TAKEN UP BY THE CLERGY

F. Van Bambeke, S. J., and the Abbe Cuylits had been condemned by the German military tribunals for having helped Belgian youths to cross the frontier. As a result of the Cardinal's intervention, the Governor General consented to set the Abbe Cuylits at liberty and gave permission to F. Van Bambeke to undergo his punishment in a Belgian prison.

In communicating to the Cardinal this act of clemency, Von Bissing complains for the first time of the patriotic attitude assumed by the clergy. This theme of discussion, which is here only hinted at, will later on form the object of extensive correspondence between his Eminence and the German authorities.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
March 27th, 1915.

To His Excellency, Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—The Reverend Father Van Bambeke, S. J., prefect of the Central Art and Mechanical School, rue d'Allemagne, Brussels, has been condemned to two years and a half penal servitude for having provided facilities to two or three young men to pass the frontier, and the Abbe Cuylits, cure of N. D., at Cureghem, has to undergo one year of the same penalty for a similar offense.

The two ecclesiastics are in poor health, which would be shattered for good and all by residence in a foreign land.

For this reason I appeal with confidence to your Excel-

lency's humane sentiments and ask you to arrange that both the religious and the secular priest may undergo their punishment in our own country.

I would be extremely obliged to you were you to comply with my request, and I beg you to accept, sir, the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

Governor General's Office, Brussels,
III b. T. L. No. 1422. *April 4th,* 1915.

DECREE

Grant of Pardon to the Abbe Cuylits and F. Bambeke, S. J.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Malines.

To my deep regret I have often been forced latterly to take a decision about appeals for reprieve in the case of ecclesiastics who have been punished for having behaved toward the German authorities in a manner unworthy of their state.

If I again adopt great clemency in the case of the Cure Cuylits, of Cureghem, and of F. Van Bambeke, S. J., it can only be an exception; I have only decided to do so in consideration of the pressing recommendations I have received on behalf of the Cure Cuylits, who is indispensable to his parish, and in view of F. Van Bambeke's poor state of health.

I would observe that in future, if priests are again found guilty of offenses against the German authorities, I shall not avail myself of my prerogative.

The Governor General,
(Signed) BARON VON BISSING,
Lieut. General.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
April 16th, 1915.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—I have had to be away from Malines these last few days and have been unable to reply as soon as I should

have liked to letter No. 1422, which your Excellency did me the honor of addressing to me.

In allowing F. Van Bambeke to undergo his penalty in a Belgian prison your Excellency has done a very kind act for which the prisoner's friends will be grateful; and in authorizing the Cure Cuylits to re-enter his parish at Cureghem, you have done a good service to the religious and moral interests of our diocese. We thank you in all sincerity and beg you to consider this letter as an expression of our gratitude.

Your Excellency is afraid that you will not in future be able to see your way to show leniency to the clergy, and you warn me of the necessity in which you might find yourself to meet me with a refusal if I should again have recourse to your right to grant a reprieve. I hope there will no longer be any occasion for it.

Your Excellency can hardly forbid me from thinking that, should recourse to your prerogative be eventually justified, you should again see your way to taking such steps as equity demands.

Accept, sir, the expression of my feelings of gratitude and sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

CHAPTER X

SCHEME FOR AN INQUIRY ON THE SUBJECT OF ASSAULTS COMMITTED BY GERMAN SOLDIERS UPON NUNS

We have seen how the Kreischef of Malines had communicated to the Cardinal a scheme for an inquiry about priests put to death by German troops during the first weeks of invasion. The Cardinal, having in his letter of January 24th replied that he would lend his aid only to an international committee of inquiry, which alone could offer guarantees of impartiality, remained unanswered. The scheme for an inquiry was shelved.

Von Bissing raised the point once again. Only, without trying to throw light on all the horrors which had marked the entry of the Germans into Belgium, he would have liked to limit his inquiry to a single point, viz., the outrages committed against nuns by German soldiers. The Cardinal, while he hinted that accusations of this character were not so void of foundation as the Governor General seemed to imagine, declared that he could take no part in an inquiry about facts of so delicate a nature. Von Bissing made a pretext of this refusal to declare that his Eminence thus recognized the falsity of the accusations brought against the German troops; once again he distorted his correspondent's views:

Governor General of Belgium, Brussels,
I. No. 1243. *March 30th,* 1915.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

The foreign press, in addition to a whole series of criminal charges which, for the most part, have been recognized as false, has put forward lately at various times the following grave accusation. German soldiers passing through Belgium have gone so far as to outrage Belgian nuns.

It is enough to remark that such crimes, if they can be proved, would certainly incur my severe condemnation, as well as that of the German Government; but, on the other hand, justice requires that every care should be taken to set aside accusations recognized as false.

I venture to think that the sentiments of justice and the interests of the Church will derive equal advantage from a full establishment of the truth. For this reason, I believe I can rely on your Eminence's willing support to second my efforts in thoroughly sifting the facts.

If your Eminence would be so kind as to forward me the documents which you may possibly have dealing with the cases of violation of nuns in your diocese, I shall then be in a position to take whatever further steps the situation may demand.

I present to your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem and remain your devoted servant.

(Signed) BARON VON BISSING,
Governor General.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
April 16th, 1915.

To His Excellency, Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—I have duly received the letter No. 1243 with which your Excellency has honored me and I am sorry I was prevented from answering it earlier.

Rumors are indeed being bruited by certain newspapers, and denied by others, about outrages alleged to have been committed by German soldiers upon Belgian nuns, and in agreement with your Excellency I protest against those who thus in a light-hearted way and without proof spread broadcast among the people or entertain such odious accusations.

But when your Excellency asks me to help you in throwing light on the grounds, whether true or false, of these imputations, I find it necessary to ask you a preliminary question:

Has civil authority the right to institute an inquiry about so delicate a matter?

Whom would one question?

The confessor? The doctor? They are bound by professional secrecy.

Should it be the superiors? Do they always know the whole truth? And if they do know it, through having learned it under the seal of secrecy, have they the right to speak about it?

Would any one venture to interrogate the offended parties? Would not this be cruel? Would any one attempt to induce the witnesses to speak at the risk of making known the hapless victims of a violence which would, in the opinion of the public, bring upon them the stain of dishonor?

So far as I am concerned, I would not dare to submit anybody to an interrogatory on so delicate a subject, and any confidences which have already been extended to me spontaneously, or in the future will be made to me on this subject, my conscience forbids me to reveal to others.

Our duty, your Excellency, is to prevent by every means in our power the public from indulging in such wanton and immoral allegations; and I shall approve with all my heart any effort at repression which justice chooses to adopt with those who either of set purpose or through an unpardonable levity invent these tales or spread them broadcast. But I think we cannot proceed any further without encroaching upon the rights of conscience and without also exposing them to violation.

Accept, dear Governor General, a renewed assurance of my deep esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

Governor General of Belgium, Brussels,
P. A. J. No. 1877. *April 20th,* 1915.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

I have the honor of expressing to your Eminence my hearty thanks for your letter of the 16th instant.

I perfectly understand the feelings which hindered your

Eminence from undertaking any painful inquiry in order to answer the questions which I had addressed to you. I had indeed no intention of exacting such an inquiry. I had reason rather to believe that if, after all, these reports had any solid foundation, the ecclesiastical authorities would, in one way or another, have had cognizance of them. It is enough now to state that neither your Eminence nor the other bishops can furnish any proof based on facts of these reports, and I feel bound again to declare indignantly that they are purposely propagated and with malicious intent.

I willingly agree that an inquiry, having for its object the refutation of these lying accusations, would be of a nature to wound the modesty of nuns. Nevertheless, I cannot refrain from pointing out to your Eminence that in presence of such allegations I myself and all who have at heart the honor and good name of the German soldiers experience like sentiments. It is in the name of these same feelings which your Eminence finds justifiable, while intervening on behalf of the nuns confined to your care, that I claim the right to check with every means at my command the slanders that are leveled at our troops.

It is with all the more gratitude, then, that I acknowledge that your Eminence, in the most peremptory way, disapproves of the propagation of such lies in the press, and that I venture to count on your benevolent co-operation in defeating these malicious machinations.

Allow me to offer to your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem, and I have the honor to be your devoted servant,

(Signed) BARON VON BISSING,
Major General.

CHAPTER XI

THE MUSTER-ROLL OF YOUNG MEN CLASHING WITH RELIGIOUS SERVICES ON SUNDAYS

In certain communes the muster-roll of young men of military age took place at the same time as divine service on Sundays. The Cardinal had complained of this to the German authorities. Von Bissing informed him that he had just published an order commanding his subordinates to take care that the young men liable to roll-call should be able to fulfill their religious obligations. The Cardinal thanked him for this measure.

Governor General's Office, Brussels,
April 1st, 1915.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Malines.

I have the honor of informing your Eminence that in consequence of the complaints which have been brought to my notice regarding the clashing of the young men's muster-roll with the church services, I have published an order of which I inclose a copy.

The Governor General.
(Signed) Baron von Bissing,
Major General.

Governor General's Office, Brussels,
Sect. Ic. No. 2564. *April 1st,* 1915.

Whenever the day appointed for the muster-roll falls on a Sunday or feast day the authorities of the several districts are requested to take care that those who have to present themselves shall be able to fulfill their religious duties. To effect this, it will be sufficient in most cases to advance or delay the opening of the muster parade by one or two hours.

The Governor General.
(Signed) Baron von Bissing,
Major General.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
April 6th, 1915.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—Your Excellency has been so kind as to let me know that, in deference to an expressed wish of mine, you have been willing to fix the rollcall of young men of military age at hours which do not coincide with those for religious worship.

I deem it my duty to express to you my thankfulness for this benevolent action and would ask you to accept the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

CHAPTER XII

VON BISSING COMPLAINS OF A DISCOURSE OF MGR. DE WACHTER'S

Governor General's Office, Brussels,
April 14th, 1915.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

According to the newspaper "The Courier," of Dundee, of February 15th, Mgr. de Wachter, of Malines, delivered a discourse on February 14th at Willesden, in which he is stated to have said that four ecclesiastics who had the preceding week returned from Germany, declared that they had there been compelled to perform the vilest tasks and had suffered every kind of outrage. One day they had been placed against the wall at the same time as the English and French prisoners and informed that they were about to be shot and rifles had then been levelled at them. After the lapse of an hour they were told that their execution had been deferred. These scenes had been repeated for several days in succession. Among those who had been subjected to these frightful torments, many had completely lost their reason.

I ask your Eminence to inform me where Mgr. De Wachter now resides in order that he may be heard in regard to these monstrous accusations.

The Governor General.

(Signed) BARON VON BISSING,
Major General.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
April 18th, 1915.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—I hasten to give your Excellency the address of Mgr. De Wachter, auxiliary bishop of the diocese of Malines. For over six months he has been residing in London with Mgr. Amigo, Bishop of Southwark. His address is:

Bishop's House, St. George's Road, Southwark, S. E. London.

I am ignorant alike of the subject matter of this discourse and its delivery, of which your Excellency speaks on the authority of the "Courier," of Dundee.

Accept, dear Governor General, the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CARDINAL'S INTERVIEW WITH MGR. MITTENDORF

On April 14th, 1915, Mgr. Mittendorf, Catholic Chaplain-General of the German armies of the West, presented himself at the Archiepiscopal Palace. Admitted to the Cardinal's presence, he declared that he was charged with a mission from the Governor General; he took a letter from his pocket and proceeded to read it. When he had finished, the Cardinal, with a natural gesture, put out his hand to receive the letter, imagining that it was meant for him. But Mgr. Mittendorf was unwilling to give it up. He even went so far as to refuse, no one knows for what reason, to allow the Cardinal to glance at the document which he had just read.

Here, in substance, is the communication from Von Bissing:

The newspapers have published a letter from your Eminence to Cardinal Amette. Now there is a regulation which forbids any Belgian to correspond with any one whatever without first submitting his letter to the German censorship. Moreover, your Eminence has recognized in your Christmas pastoral the necessity of obedience to the authorities in occupation.

If any other citizen whatever had committed the breach of which your Eminence has rendered yourself guilty, we should have to punish him. But out of love of peace and through respect for the Holy See and the sacred purple which your Eminence wears, we are unwilling to inflict punishment on you. We should prefer, should your Eminence force us to take such a step, to lay the matter before the Holy See.

The Cardinal did not hesitate to acknowledge that he had written to the Archbishop of Paris.

"And even," he added, "I received yesterday a French newspaper, the 'Matin,' which publishes extracts of my letter. This publication is preceded by some lines of introduction in which it is stated that this letter is private, and the paper puts some extracts only before its readers."

"Private or not, it is none the less the revelation of a fact, namely, that your Eminence has set at nought the regulation which obliges every Belgian in the occupied territory to submit his correspondence to the German censorship."

"I am aware of this regulation, and the Governor General will recollect that it has already been the subject of an exchange of views between us. Indeed, in answer to the question which he addressed to me in his letter of January 3rd, regarding the means by which I learned that the King of England had ordered a day of intercession, I replied that even a lawful government would not consider itself entitled to set on foot an inquiry regarding my private intercourse, and I could not therefore believe that it could enter into the plans of the Governor General to ask me how I had been able to correspond either with my own sovereign or with the King of England. This regulation does indeed exist, but it must be interpreted according to the rules of common sense. The Governor General has himself placed in my hands a letter which Cardinal von Hartmann had written to him in which he asked permission for the Belgian bishops to correspond freely with the Holy See. I thought I might count on the tacit consent of the German authorities for acts rendered necessary by my situation. You are a priest, Monsignor; you should inform the Governor General regarding the working of a diocesan administration."

"I do not speak as a priest," brusquely interrupted Mgr. Mittendorf, "I am here only as the envoy of his Excellency Von Bissing."

"Quite so, I am aware of it; but I know also that you are a Catholic priest, and as such, in a position to enlighten your government regarding Catholic life. Now, can any one who has the least idea of the needs of Catholic diocesan

administration imagine that I could remain for whole months without intercourse with Rome? I have written, and that, too, several times, to the Holy See, to the Roman congregations, to my colleagues of the Sacred College in Italy, England, the United States and elsewhere: the obligations of my pastoral charge render it a duty for me to declare that I could not refrain in the future also from corresponding with those abroad. It is useless to inquire by what means I correspond. Have we not every day friends from the United States, from Italy, from Holland, who come to see me and offer their services? Do not the United States legation, the Spanish legation, the Nunciature correspond freely with those abroad? I do not, mark well, indicate any of these ways to insinuate that I have actually availed myself of any of them, but I wish to prove that to put myself in communication, when needful, with other countries, suitable means are never lacking."

"What especially annoys the Governor General is the fact that your Eminence's letter to Cardinal Amette has been made public."

"Oh, but many of my letters sent abroad have likewise become public, among others the letter of thanks addressed to the United States, to Canada, to England, to Ireland, in return for the generous acts of those nations toward the Belgian people, on which occasions no complaint was made to me. Be sure of this; no Belgian will take advantage of my correspondence with foreign nations to maintain that every one has the right to the same freedom as I lay claim to. The Belgians are endowed with good sense."

"Could not your Eminence have submitted your letter to Cardinal Amette to censorship?"

"This letter conveyed my thanks to the French bishops for the sympathy which they kindly wished to testify when I published my Christmas pastoral. I waited two months before showing my gratitude, a proof that I was no agitator. I had to answer under penalty of passing for a man without manners. Now suppose, Monsignor, that I had submitted to the Governor General a letter of thanks to those who publicly took my side at the moment of the controversy

which had arisen between him and me, what would his Excellency have said? What could he have said? That I was ridiculing him. Very well, I did not wish to ridicule his Excellency. Behold the whole of my wrong-doing, if wrong-doing there was. Our interview is coming to an end, Monsignor; let me draw from it one conclusion. You Germans, after many months of occupation, have not yet got to know the Belgians. Among you a general commands and automatically every one obeys. Here with us, good sense, regard for higher interests, interprets the order and dictates our conduct. External regulations are meant, no doubt, for every one; and it is in this sense that I have acknowledged them as the Governor General reminds me in his letter. But every one applies them with a due regard for different contingencies and the obligations which they entail."

At the end of the conversation Mgr. Mittendorf seemed to wish the Cardinal to state what his future attitude would be. To this request the Cardinal made no reply, and after a few minutes' silence bade his visitor a kindly adieu.

CHAPTER XIV

THE CARDINAL ASKS VON BISSING TO AUTHORIZE THE SENDING OF CHAPLAINS TO THE BELGIAN ARMY, AND PRESSES FOR RELIGIOUS MINISTRATIONS TO POLITICAL PRISONERS TO BE ENTRUSTED TO BELGIAN PRIESTS. THE GOVERNOR GENERAL REFUSES

Archbishop's House, Malines,
April 18th, 1915.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—I take the opportunity which your Excellency offers me to explain to you a situation in religious matters which gives me great anxiety.

I know that your Excellency has taken steps with Headquarters in Berlin, unfortunately without success, to obtain for Belgian priests, or at least Hollander priests, an authorization to go and exercise their ministry among our countrymen interned in Germany. It only remains for us to await patiently the result of this request, which is made solely from a sense of religious feeling and which ought, one would think, appear to all as quite disinterested.

What at present worries me is the organization of the chaplaincies in the Belgian army.

Since the beginning of the war several chaplains have died or have been brought to the hospitals wounded; others have been recalled to Belgium by us because they were wanted by their parishes or for teaching. The need of their being replaced in the army is urgent.

Will your Excellency allow me to propose to you the names of four priests to whom you might grant a passport? I should be pleased to add to them the name of a priest who is asked for by the refugee Belgians at Uden in Holland.

Again, it is exclusively the interests of religion which are at stake here; and I forward my request with all candor and confidence to the General Government.

Accept, sir, the renewed expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

Governor General of Belgium, Brussels,
April 22d, 1915.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

On the 18th of this month your Eminence asked me to grant a passport to five Belgian ecclesiastics in order to allow them to go and exercise their priestly ministry in the Belgian army and among a number of refugees.

I regret to be unable to comply with your Eminence's request. Among other reasons which dictate my decision is the consideration that in the occupied part of Belgium the need of priests begins to make itself felt, and I feel I can attach all the more weight to this circumstance, inasmuch as the Belgian army can have recourse to French priests.

I offer your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem and I have the honor to be your very devoted servant.

(Signed) BARON VON BISSING,
Major General.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
April 24th, 1915.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—The motives which could even for an instant restrain your Excellency from granting the request I made of you with confidence for a passport for priests destined to rejoin the Belgian army and our refugees at Uden, will quite naturally come to the mind of any one who is not acquainted with the special conditions attached to the administration of spiritual help to our countrymen.

It is quite true, your Excellency, that there is a dearth of priests in Belgium also. In all the colleges staffs are

reduced to a third; a number of parishes are without one or several curates. But it is true, on the other hand, that in Belgium the population of the parishes and the pupils in schools are reduced in number; it is also true that industries, for instance economic and social industries, have greatly slackened their activities.

On the other hand, in the army the presence of a priest in each battalion is indispensable and this is an immediate and every-day necessity. Moreover, it is out of the question to appeal to the co-operation of the French clergy, for the regiments of the Belgian army being all bilingual, it is absolutely needful that the chaplain should know both French and Flemish.

In case there be any suspicion at the back of your Excellency's mind to deter you this reminds me of the expression "unter anderem" of the dispatch No. 1883 *—I give you my word of honor that the priests in whose favor I ask for a passport will be chaplains and have no other purpose in view than to act as such.

A distressing situation, your Excellency, to which I would respectfully draw your attention, has been brought to my notice. When priests happen to be in solitary confinement in St. Giles they are forbidden to celebrate or even to hear mass. On Easter Sunday F. Van Bambeke and the Cure Cuylits were deprived of this consolation, of which a Catholic and a priest alone can, in my opinion, estimate the value. Nevertheless, the service of our prison cells is organized in such a manner that it is materially impossible for the inmates to communicate with one another in the chapel.

Is it permissible to hope that Catholic prisoners may have facilities for attending mass at least on Sundays; that priests may be able to celebrate mass daily, and that all may have the consolation of a visit from the prison chaplain?

I hope that your Excellency will not consider out of

* NOTE—The German text to which reference is made runs as follows: "Wenn ich mich zu meinem Bedauern nicht bereit erklaren kann, den Wunsch Euerer Eminenz zu erfullen, so leitet mich dabei unter anderem der Gesichtspunkt, dass auch hier in Belgien sich schon einiget Mangel an Geistlichen fuehlbar gemacht hat."

place the earnestness with which I plead for the religious interests of my fellow countrymen. I do so to quiet my own conscience, for in the spiritual realm I am responsible for their direction.

Please accept, sir, the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

The Governor General of Belgium, Brussels,
S. No. P. A. I. 2130. *May 1st,* 1915.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

Your Eminence has again asked permission for certain priests to cross the frontier in order to go and serve as chaplains in the Belgian army. I regret to be unable to recommend this request to the competent authorities. The state of war in which we find ourselves renders it altogether impossible.

Regarding the second request contained in your Eminence's letter, I am quite ready to intrust the rector of the German mission at Brussels, Father Leyendecker, with the spiritual interests of the Belgian ecclesiastics interned at St. Giles. Father Leyendecker is known to your Eminence; he speaks French and Flemish. I must also say that I am of opinion that these priests should have facilities to say mass.

I offer to your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem and I have the honor to be your devoted servant.

(Signed) BARON VON BISSING,
Major General.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
May 14th, 1915.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—The letter dated May 1st (No. 2130) with which your Excellency has honored me and which unavoidable circumstances have prevented my answering earlier has brought about in my mind, I must say, an unpleasant disillusionment.

If I have insisted on obtaining a passport for four chaplains destined to fill the gaps which have taken place in our chaplaincies, it is because I could not succeed in fathoming the reason for the first refusal I met with. Relying on the candor of my two requests, I expected marks of particular benevolence.

All I can do, therefore, is to record a new check to religion in Belgium.

Several representatives of German authority do not, I fear, appreciate at its full value the importance attached by the Catholic conscience to confession. Otherwise they would not obstinately refuse us the sanction solicited by us already so often, both by word of mouth and in writing, to send to our prisoners detained in Germany a few priests speaking their language and to whom they could with full freedom open their consciences.

Will you kindly reflect a moment, sir, that for eight months thousands of Belgians, solely because they have served their country with honor, are confronted with the moral impossibility of setting their consciences at rest? Catholic confession reaches the inmost recesses of the soul, and the German authorities wish the avowal it exacts, humiliating enough as it is, involuntarily or not, to be made to a man who reminds his penitent of the power of the oppressor, the responsible author of his captivity.

Is that humane? Is that Christian?

What then has poor Belgium done to Germany to be tortured on its own soil, to have its property destroyed, and the lives of its most inoffensive sons cruelly sacrificed; and now finally to be tortured in the consciences of those whose patriotism has borne them into exile and imprisonment?

And yet the general headquarters cannot allege any "necessity of war" for refusing our prisoners the free exercise of their religion.

If it exacts that the German chaplains should be replaced by priests from a neutral country, Holland has promised to supply them.

Even if it exacts that these priests should have no com-

munication with the outer world, Belgian priests will carry charity to the point of heroism, and declare that they are ready to share the internment of their fellow countrymen till the day of general liberation comes.

Can one reasonably ask for more?

To my last request in favor of those detained in the St. Giles prison, your Excellency answers that you agree to it, provided the ministry be carried on by Father Leyendecker, of German nationality.

I am personally acquainted with Father Leyendecker and hold him in high esteem. But why inflict on Belgian chaplains an unmerited privation?

The Catholic mass, composed as it is of ceremonies and of Latin words, gives no room for any direct communication between the priest and the faithful; and hence provides the celebrant with no opportunity for taking an unfair advantage of his ministry.

For the practice of sacramental confession, a German chaplain, whatever may be his personal merits, incurs the objection which I have noted above. I know the priestly zeal of Father Leyendecker and his experience of men too well to suspect that he cannot understand the disquietude of my countrymen's souls and will not help me to plead with you for their liberty of conscience.

Will your Excellency kindly make a new endeavor to obtain for prisoners of war in Germany the liberty of practicing their religious faith without superhuman efforts?

Your Excellency has had the kindness to allow the imprisoned priests to celebrate mass; this is a mark of signal benevolence on your part for which I am exceedingly grateful and a thing which all the priests interested will highly value.

Lastly, will your Excellency please consider that the Belgians arrested in Belgium by the German authorities are not "ordinary criminals," but for the most part citizens beyond reproach—victims of what by the prisoner is called "patriotism" and by the detaining power "the inevitable laws of war"? Will you spare them, in the name of humanity, all unnecessary severity, and authorize the accused,

after they have been examined, to receive a visit from a chaplain who possesses their confidence and, with that, the means of consoling them, of upholding their moral strength, and every time the prisoners express the wish, of hearing their confessions?

Accept, sir, the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

Governor General of Belgium, Brussels,
May 19th, 1915.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

I am in receipt of your Eminence's letter of the 14th instant.

Relative to the decisions which on two different occasions I have been led to take regarding the desires manifested by your Eminence concerning the religious interests of your diocese, you have risen up in wrath against me, employing offensive expressions in my regard and accusations which I resent as unjustified. It has thus been impossible for me to offer any definite defense. I shall at last find myself compelled to refuse to have for the future written or unwritten relations with your Eminence or to take into consideration requests possibly justifiable unless your Eminence employs toward me in the language used the courtesy which I have the right to exact.

Up to the present I have forced myself, in ample measure, to make allowance in religious matters, as in others, for the situation created by the particular circumstances in which we find ourselves. But I must protest against the way in which your Eminence finds pretexts to enter into conflict with me in my character of representative of his Majesty the Emperor, my supreme chief.

I offer to your Eminence the assurance of my sincere esteem, and I have the honor to be your devoted servant.

(Signed) BARON VON BISSING,
Major General.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
May 29th, 1915.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—The letter No. 2722, dated May 19th, with which your Excellency has honored me, has come duly to hand and I wish to acknowledge it.

In order to conform with your Excellency's desire, I shall refrain from treating directly with you the question of the performance of their religious duties by Belgian prisoners in Germany or by those confined in the prison of St. Giles.

But truth compels me to point out that in my preceding correspondence I have never been impelled by my solicitude for any other feeling than the moral and religious interests of my countrymen. For these interests I am responsible. I am aware that I have shown a certain amount of vehemence in supporting the cause I had to defend. I beg your Excellency to recognize in my language only the expression of deep convictions. In the course of my career, already long, I have been engaged in numerous discussions, sometimes with friends, at other times with adversaries; I never remember having been charged with want of courtesy toward the people with whom I have been in controversy. The fact that my thoughts are centered on truth as it stands might sometimes suggest the idea that my judgment of facts aims at persons and their intentions; but may I say that that is a result for which in justice I alone cannot be held responsible?

Your Excellency is kind enough to end your letter by declaring your good-will to take a generous view of our religious welfare. This emboldens me to bring two facts to your notice. It is for you to consider them and to judge whether they call for your intervention. I think it my duty to make them known to you.

The Baron von Baudenhausen, military commander at Antwerp, in a letter addressed to the dean of Antwerp, makes certain complaints against the clergy of which one is quoted in these terms: "Auch ein Fall der Verweigerung

der Absolution, weil das Beichtkind sich nicht verpflichtete, seine deutsche Dienstherrschaft zu verlassen, ist gemeldet." *

What goes on in the secrecy of the confessional box is free from all exterior jurisdiction, whether civil, military, or even religious.

On Monday, May 24th, in Whitsun Week—at 10 a. m. —in accordance with an old standing tradition, a procession took place at Malines. The procession had been authorized by the Kreischef of Malines, M. Jochmus. At the moment when this procession of devout faithful, which was in every sense of a religious nature and was presided over by his Lordship Mgr. Legraive, Auxiliary Bishop of the diocese, was making its way round the Grand Place, a German military band broke through the procession and created a great din as they passed by the side of the bishop who was carrying the Blessed Sacrament.

Happily, the clergy and the crowd were able to restrain their indignation. Nevertheless, their innermost feelings were deeply pained.

Please accept, sir, the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

* NOTE—"Another case is reported of a denial of absolution because the penitent refused to leave his service in the German army."

CHAPTER XV

THE GOVERNOR GENERAL AUTHORIZES THE CORPUS CHRISTI PROCESSION

Governor General of Belgium, Brussels,
Sekt. 11b. No. 5392. *May 18th,* 1915.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

I have the honor to inform your Eminence that I have given instructions to all the governors, military and civil, who are under my orders, to permit this year, on request, the customary processions of Corpus Christi. But I trust these processions will preserve their strictly religious character and that no advantage will be taken of them to make them serve political ends. Only religious hymns and banners will be permitted; national anthems (the Brabanconne, etc.) and national flags are forbidden. If it is usual for bands to take part in the procession, they are forbidden to play the national anthem and must confine themselves to playing an accompaniment to the religious chants. It is forbidden to fire off guns or maroons.

I trust that your Eminence's good sense and influence will succeed in hindering any abuse of the liberty which I willingly grant in consideration of the interests of religion.

The Governor General.

(Signed) BARON VON BISSING,
Major General.

CHAPTER XVI

VON BISSING REFUSES TO ALLOW BELGIAN COUNSEL TO DEFEND FATHERS DE BRUYNE AND BOONE, S. J., ARRAIGNED BEFORE THE MILITARY TRIBUNAL OF ANTWERP

FATHERS de Bruyne and Boone, S. J., were arrested on June 12, 1915, on the charge of having helped young men desirous of joining the Belgian army to cross the frontier. After having been kept in the most rigorous solitary confinement for more than five weeks, they were to appear on July 27th before a court-martial to be held at Antwerp. The barristers, M. Franck and M. Vaes, had offered to defend the accused. The military court rejected this proffered legal assistance and claimed the right to nominate its own official counsel. The Cardinal, having learned these facts, intervened for the recognition of the rights claimed by the defendants. The Governor General agreed to defer the matter for further inquiry, but absolutely refused to grant the defendants Belgian counsel. The former appeared before the tribunal on August 12th, 1915. Fr. Boone was condemned to twelve years' penal servitude; Fr. de Bruyne was acquitted.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
July 26th, 1915.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—Fathers de Bruyne and Boone have to appear before the Government "Gericht" at Antwerp on Tuesday, July 27th.

If I am not mistaken, the ninth paragraph of the "Kaiserliche * Verordnung ueber das ausserordentliche Kriegs-

* NOTE—Imperial ordinance defining the extraordinary measures to be taken in time of war against foreigners.

gerechtliche Verfahren gegen Auslaender" recognizes the right of the accused to be defended before courts-martial.

The court-martial at Antwerp refuses the offer made by the two barristers, M. Franck and M. Vaes, to defend the prisoners, whom the accused themselves had chosen, and claims the exclusive rights of naming an official pleader for the defense.

The barristers likewise claim the right to examine collaterally with the official counsel the charges which have been made against the accused and the right of providing their clients with the means of defense. This demand has just been formally rejected.

It is clear then, sir, that the rights of defense guaranteed by the law of the Empire are not recognized here.

As the interests of priests belonging to my diocese are at stake, I deem it my duty to report this unfortunate incident to your Excellency and beg you to give an urgent order for the postponement of the suit that it may be possible for the defendants to prepare their defense in co-operation with counsel of their own choice.

Please accept, sir, the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

The Governor General of Belgium, Brussels,
Sect. Ib. No. 6953. *August 3rd,* 1915.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

In answer to your Eminence's esteemed letter of July 26th, I have the honor to inform you that immediately after receiving it I gave orders to defer to a later date the depositions of the trial set on foot against the priests de Bruyne and Boone. I have submitted the whole of this affair to a minute inquiry.

I regret nevertheless to be unable to give effect to your Eminence's request; the necessities of war do not allow strangers to become advocates for the defense in a trial for treasonable acts. I have the honor to communicate herewith to your Eminence the certified copy of the regulation which I have sent on this subject to the competent authority.

I offer to your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem and I have the honor to be your devoted servant.

(Signed) BARON VON BISSING.

Governor General's Office, Brussels,

11 *A. T. L. No.* 4403. *August 2d,* 1915.

To the Tribunal of the Fortress of Antwerp

Regulation

The refusal to allow the priests de Bruyne and Boone Belgian advocates in the trial of the charge of high treason brought against them is justified; it is quite lawful to forbid all intercourse between the advocates chosen by the accused and the official advocate assigned.

The right of defense, which, according to the ninth paragraph of the imperial decree of December 28th, 1899, belongs to foreign enemies, must be limited by the exigencies of war; these do not permit strangers to be put in possession of the evidence in a charge of high treason, and this could not be avoided if they were permitted to act as advocates for the defense in trials of this nature.

In consequence, Cardinal Mercier's objection of July 28th, 1915, must be considered as unfounded and must be rejected.

The Governor General.

(Signed) BARON VON BISSING,
Major General.

CHAPTER XVII

INTERVIEW BETWEEN CARDINAL MERCIER AND BARON VON DER LANCKEN REGARDING THE PASTORAL LETTER, "A CALL TO PRAYER"

On Sunday, September 26th, 1915, the clergy in all the churches of the diocese read another pastoral letter of his Eminence entitled "A Call to Prayer." Therein the Cardinal lavished on his flock once more words of encouragement and counsel. "Our trials," he says, "are protracted; do not yield, I beg, to weariness; let us not cease to pray and do good; the sower must wait for the harvest; in its own good time it will come and will not fail us."

After showing that the conflict between good and evil dates from the beginning of the world and that the combat of Lucifer and the holy angels is being renewed unceasingly during the ages, the Cardinal recommends the people of his diocese to take advantage of the Feast of St. Michael, September 29th, and the first days of the rosary month, to redouble the ardor of their prayers for the early deliverance of their Belgian fatherland. He asks them to recite for the future with attention the prayer which is said after mass: "And thou, Prince of the Heavenly Host, we beg thee, cast down into hell Satan and the other wicked spirits who wander through the world for the ruin of souls." The letter concluded with an invitation to communicate once at least in the interval between September 29th and Friday, October 1st, or on Sunday, October 3rd, and while they invoked the Sacred Heart and our Blessed Lady, to place the combatants under the shield of St. Michael.

The Germans recognized themselves under the designation of "Satan and the other wicked spirits"; thus the letter let loose in the press beyond the Rhine a veritable torrent

of invectives and menaces against the Cardinal. Despite this outburst, the Governor General did not act with the same precipitation in demanding explanations from his Eminence as he manifested on the occasion of the pastoral letter, "Patriotism and Endurance." For ten days he gave no sign of life. It was only on Tuesday, October 7th, that Baron von der Lancken telephoned to Canon Loncin, secretary of the archdiocese, saying that he desired to visit the Cardinal the following day for the purpose of making a communication to him on behalf of the Governor General. An appointment was made for his reception by the Cardinal at 4 o'clock in the afternoon.

The following day Von der Lancken presented himself at the Archbishop's House three-quarters of an hour late, pleading a breakdown of his motor as the cause of the delay. He was conducted to the Cardinal.

The interview lasted about two hours, and the following is a faithful account from notes made by the Cardinal himself immediately after the Baron's departure.

As soon as they were seated the Baron, after informing the Cardinal that the document he was about to read had been drawn up by himself at the instance of his Excellency von Bissing and had afterward been approved by him, began the reading of four or five foolscap pages. The reading being ended, the Cardinal asked if he might have the document. The answer was in the negative: "No, I have my instructions not to give up the manuscript."

"In that case, it will not be possible for me to reply as adequately as I could wish to each of the complaints tabulated in the Governor General's dispatch."

"Oh, my mission is not to discuss, but to communicate to your Eminence the Governor General's views."

"Still, it is needful that I should thoroughly understand his views. In a word, I presume the Governor General wishes to know whether or not I embrace his way of regarding things."

"Probably."

"I believe I can recapitulate as follows, Baron, the communication which you have just read to me:

1. Your pastoral, "Call to Prayer," which was read in all the churches, accompanied at times by commentaries which emphasize still more its trend, is an incitement of a political nature: it is bound to produce among the masses a political ferment, and, in fact, we have noted in more than one place, foresigns of a seditious outbreak.

2. Your Eminence's attitude is so much the less justifiable in that you have given the Governor General reason to hope that in the general interests of the country you would co-operate with him in pacifying the people and also in that you are well acquainted with the benevolent dispositions entertained by his Excellency Baron von Bissing.

3. This attitude is with difficulty reconciled with your Eminence's frequent appeals to the Governor General for the granting of favors to your fellow countrymen.

4. Lastly, the fact that your Eminence's letter, which was contemporaneous with the German troops' temporary setback of some kilometers on the line of battle, is so striking that it is not susceptible of explanation save as the outcome of a preconcerted understanding of the Primate of Belgium with the allied armies; and this serves to prove up to the hilt the political character of the pastoral letter.

"To these four complaints, which I believe epitomize your communication, I desire to make at once a comprehensive reply."

The Baron's silence confirmed the Cardinal in thinking that his recapitulation was accurate.

"1. You say, Sir Baron, that my letter is seditious; that it inflames the people against the occupying authority, and that you perceive already here and there traces of popular excitement.

"This is the third time that you have ventured to address me in language such as this. The first time was last January, when my letter on 'Patriotism and Endurance' appeared; the second time in June, when, deprived of my motorcar, I was compelled to walk on foot to Vilvorde in order to reach Brussels, and this is now the third time that you renew such language.

"Has experience, then, not opened your eyes?

"Despite your pessimistic anticipations, has not the country continued calm? Is there a single Belgian during the year that you have been treading our soil under circumstances known to you; is there, I say, a single Belgian that has touched a hair of a single German head? Has a shot been fired at any of your men?"

"No; because we hold a firm hand and keep a sharp lookout."

"Not at all, sir; it is not because you hold a firm hand and keep a sharp lookout. You would certainly admit that if political passions, as you affirm, were inflamed against you, there would be found here and there behind a wall or from the security of an upper story a hand armed with a revolver to fire on you. And among the thousands of our men who risk their lives endeavoring to join our army some few would be found perchance to do you an evil turn in the dark. You, on the contrary, have used every expedient to provoke a rising of the people, but the obstinate calmness of our men has thwarted you."

"So it is we who have provoked you? We are the provokers?"

"Yes, sir: you are the provokers; and I will immediately furnish the proof.

"At the time my first pastoral was published, what did you do? You sent soldiers in the morning and night on bicycles and motorcycles and also in noisy motorcars through all the peaceful villages of Campine and Wallon district; you suddenly awakened out of their sleep the clergy, sacristans, servants in presbyteries, with threats on your lips and sometimes with a revolver in your hand; you made them open the churches and sacristies, the drawers of desks, in the hope of laying hands on my pastoral and this fine game lasted several days, and while in his letter of January 3rd the Governor General foretold, just as you do today, a rising of the people, the people remained calm in obedience to the counsels of long-suffering preached by us. Then as now, today, the Belgian people continued submissive, not because of you, but in spite of you.

"And when I went to Brussels to sing a mass at St. Gudule, do you not recollect how you treated me?

"In imagination, I can still see the rough fellow, who barred my way on the canal bridge at the city gate insolently demanding my identity papers."

"Oh! all our soldiers have not been brought up in drawing-rooms."

"Nor ours either. Accordingly, it is not on this intentional insult that I wish to base my contention. If I have recalled this fact, it is to emphasize another, namely, that when several eye-witnesses, exasperated at this spectacle of impertinence, had respectfully applauded the Cardinal for having answered the demand addressed to him with an act of docility, one of your officers ordered a bayonet charge to be made on women and children, who, without uttering a word, had lavished upon me marks of respect. Was this, or was it not, calculated to provoke the people?

"And the next day, and the next, how did you treat me?

"After singing mass at St. Gudule I betook myself to the Institute of St. Louis, and at 6 o'clock in the evening I took my departure for a small country house I possessed at l'Hermite sous Braine-l'Alleud. Already in the boulevard of the Botanical Garden in front of St. Louis, two spies on bicycles awaited me and they followed my carriage all the way."

"Perhaps some police officer had on his own initiative taken this step, but the authorities are not responsible."

"Pardon me, sir, the authorities are responsible."

"The Governor General?"

"At any rate a high authority and here is the proof. The spies escorted my carriage, halting when we slackened our pace, quickening again when we descended an incline. Arrived at Alsemberg, three kilometers from l'Hermite, as night was falling, I went to the cure's residence and slept at the presbytery. The following day at 5 o'clock in the morning I set out on foot in the direction of l'Hermite. Scarcely had I left the village when I encountered three German soldiers on horseback coming toward me from the direction of Braine-l'Alleud. The moment they had passed

me they turned bridle to accompany me to my destination. I learned later that the spies had gone during the early hours into the churches of Braine-l'Alleud and Alsemberg to see if the priest at the altar was not the Cardinal. Therefore, Baron, the spying was organized by some one who held authority both at Brussels and in the district of Nivelles, where Braine-l'Alleud is situated; it was therefore a high authority—a very high authority."

After these words his Eminence made a slight pause to see what impression he had made on his interlocutor; the Baron remained confused. The Cardinal continued:

"And during the four days I passed in the country I had two sentinels who ostensibly guarded my little property, questioned the visitors, followed them when they left to ascertain the object of their visit: in fine, you assumed the air of people watching a criminal and trying to stifle a conspiracy.

"And if I were a sedition monger, Baron, what a splendid game I might have played! What a lovely subject for a sensational pamphlet to appear at Paris or in London! In it I might have narrated the antics at Malines and your preposterous repression of the episcopal blessing and the mild gesture of my private secretary. But I refrained; and just as you found me unbending in carrying out my pastoral duties, so did I desire to pass over merely personal incidents. I deemed it prudent to retire for some days to l'Hermite in order to withdraw from any likely manifestations of public sympathy. With your preconceived ideas regarding me, you imagined my retreat could have no other motive than revolutionary projects."

"Oh! revolutionary, no."

"Substitute seditious. See, then, Baron, how the alleged manipulation of the Belgian people's ill-will toward you existed only in your imagination, and the indications of ferment are merely the intrigues of your spies and the fuss made by your inquisitors.

"The Belgian people are calm and patient, abiding their time. There were no *francs-tireurs* when your armies invaded our territory. I trust there will be none when you

beat your retreat. Only lately I had occasion to address all the clergy of my diocese assembled at Malines for the clergy retreat, and I urged them to say to the people: 'The defense of our country must be left to our army; it is not your task to make irregular assaults on the enemy. Do not by your rashness justify the reproach that slanderous tongues brought against you at the outbreak of hostilities.'

"Why, Baron, as to the heart of the Belgian people, know that you have not captured it, nor will you ever do so. Let me say with all freedom, and be not ruffled by the apparent rudeness of my words, the Belgians do you no evil and never will; but in their hearts they hold your rule in detestation. That is the truth, and after a whole year's experience, strange to say, you do not seem to grasp it.

"Not rarely strangers, neutrals, Americans, Swiss, pass through here, and then naturally the war and the German occupation become the topic of discourse. Would you like to know the unanimous opinion of foreigners regarding you? The Germans, they say, have their points assuredly, but they lack psychology.

"Is that the case? You believe the world to be governed by abstract formulas?

"You imagine that your method of ruling, successful as it may be in Germany, must needs succeed here. You grossly deceive yourselves. I have spent my life in teaching. In so doing I have learned that in a young man's education you must first learn to know him before applying formulas. To make laws and to apply them are two different matters. You seem to be ignorant of these primary truths; hence your mistake. We keep our hearts unsubdued, but we are patient. And what I said in the month of January to those who came to complain in the Governor General's name of my first pastoral, I repeat to you today. It is by giving our people the assurance that Belgium is and will remain a free country that we are able to preach patience and to see that it is practiced in spite of you.

"I believe I have thus met the first complaint drawn up against me by the Governor General and I have at the same time implicitly furnished an answer to the second.

"2. The Governor finds there is a lack of agreement between the language of my pastorals and the kindly disposition of which I gave him an assurance when he promised on his part to do all in his power to heal all our wounds."

"Yes; the Governor General complains of your pastorals, also of the commentaries, still more unrestrained, which certain members of the clergy made upon it."

"I am pleased, Baron, that you call attention to the commentaries which you say the clergy has made on my pastoral letters. I am aware that in different circumstances you have repeated this assertion that the clergy talks politics in the pulpit, and you are wont to add: 'It is evident that in so doing the clergy obey an inspiration of the Cardinal's, since the same phrase, one of the Cardinal's phrases, is repeated by all the preachers.' Well, Baron, I should be delighted to learn what this celebrated phrase is. One day my secretary, M. Loncin, asked you for it in my name and you are said to have answered: 'Oh! that is an ancient story, I should have to refresh my memory to satisfy you.' Today, when I have the opportunity of seeing you in person, I ask you again, What is this oft-repeated phrase?"

After a pause the Baron answered: "Oh! that is past; I speak now of commentaries on your last pastoral."

"Be it so; I do not mind discussing them, but I would like to know all the same in what I have so gravely sinned in the past."

A fresh pause, and the Baron uttered never a word.

"I imagined it was understood that the Governor General would point out to the bishops the complaints he had against the clergy.

"Be good enough then to tell me who the priests of my diocese are that have made operations of a seditious nature; where, when, and in what terms did they make them?"

"I thought of bringing with me the 'dossiers' which we have at the Governor General's office incriminating several priests, but at the last moment we thought it more advisable not to discuss them."

"You will pardon me, sir, for regarding this proceeding as strange. You incriminate the clergy in my presence,

you come here for that purpose, and when I request you to bring forward definite charges you reply: 'I am not bringing forward these charges in detail, as I do not wish to discuss them.'

"In that case, all that remains for me to do is to talk about myself, of my feelings toward the Governor General, and what I think of his attitude in dealing with our country.

"My feelings have never varied, but you misunderstand them.

"Of course, I desire to spare my country fresh sufferings; and when the Governor General declares to me that it is his ambition to heal our wounds rather than to embitter them, of course I am ready to second him.

"But the Governor General's mistake, and yours too, begins the moment you imagine that you can treat us as submissive children. This you cannot do; Belgium is not a conquered country which you have the right to treat as your own: it is a belligerent nation which has preserved and hopes still to preserve her independence and her king.

"What you would like to say is: 'Put aside for the moment all the past and let us unite to work for the resurrection of the occupied country.' I know you have often used such language.

"But how can we forget the past, which is only of yesterday? The ruins of our towns and villages are still smoking, our churches have been gutted, our families are in mourning, our children in misery. But the present, in which we live, on account of which we suffer, springs from this past which your troops have created for us.

"I know, Baron, that in an interview with my secretary, Canon Loncin, you were good enough to acknowledge that not one of the priests shot by your armies at the time of invasion had been proved guilty. I am pleased with this overdue recognition of our innocence. But what has been proved in the case of our priests will be proved tomorrow, if you allow it, in the case of our massacred and imprisoned civilians. It is just this investigation we demand; and so long as our rights and the sincerity of our attitude have

not had due recognition, between you and us no understanding is possible."

"You would be quite wrong to doubt of the Governor General's kindly intentions. I, who am always near him and know him, I can assure you that he has the sincerest desire to do all he can for the Belgians."

"I do not doubt the Governor General's sincerity. When I had the honor of seeing him, he spoke with an accent of sincerity which I believed then and believe still. But between him and us there is a fundamental misunderstanding. He would wish to see us submissive, and we claim the right to remain interiorly, in heart and soul, unconquered. We respect your external regulations in so far as they are requisite for the maintenance of public order; but our allegiance goes elsewhere.

"Moreover, Baron, there is a wide margin between intention and action. Facts badly correspond with the friendly sentiments of which you give us the assurance."

"I assure you, you misunderstand Baron von Bissing."

"But come; these condemnations, one after the other, of young men, of priests who have tried to cross the frontier or have assisted others in the attempt, these condemnations to death, these shootings, etc. . . . are these proofs of kindliness?"

"Oh! it must be so; we cannot tolerate any breach of military regulations."

"Be it so; it is necessary to a certain extent, in a sense. That I understand and I do not blame you for it. But goodwill, or mere equity, would demand a milder application of your regulations.

"This is how we understand your position: You are a mighty power confronted with a very small country. You have trampled our soil under foot without any invitation from us; and your own heads have acted as spokesmen in declaring that you were sorry to have to invade our territory against your will, from necessity, and that you were desirous to repair as soon as possible the wrong done us.

"Remembering the conditions under which you have

taken possession of the greater part of our soil, you ought logically to have said to yourselves: 'We will make Belgium suffer as little as we can; we will show her all such consideration as is consistent with the needs entailed by our occupation of the country; for when we come to think of it, she was not our enemy, and after all it is we who have brought upon her the necessity of opposing our passage across her territory.'

"Why then bar the road so roughly against a few young men who are burning with a desire to fulfill their patriotic duty at their comrades' side?"

"But they would all go!"

"And if they did all go, where is the great evil? You boast of having 8,000,000 soldiers! What can a few hundreds, or let us say a few thousands, more or less, do against you?"

"It is not that; believe me, we are not afraid of them."

"Very well, then, we are agreed. You need not be afraid of them. In that case let them pass. They will be practicing a virtue which you Germans prize above all others, namely, military patriotism. It will, therefore, be a good thing. Then you will rid Belgium of youths disgruntled, humbled and without work, who at a given moment—I look at it from your own point of view—may become turbulent and dangerous to public order, which you wish and ought to preserve. Look, for example, at those young men from our universities who are champing the bit in forced inaction. Would it not be a thousand times better for them to be at the front? Or at least, if you will not let them go, if you think you ought to apply your military regulations in their case, let it be so; arrest all you may succeed in catching; prevent them from beginning their pranks again, but I beg you not to treat them as criminals.

"And if a brave priest gives these dear young fellows, of whom, after all, Belgium is legitimately proud, some friendly advice, or puts them on their road, or in general affords them help, is this sufficient reason to imprison him, consign him to a dungeon, or deport him?"

"You admit yourself, then, that the clergy is in favor of stirring up the young people."

"No, I do not admit that; but I praise the clergy for keeping the flame of patriotism alive and for not refusing paternal assistance to a parishioner, a university man, or a workman who has the courage to risk his life to go and join our army. And, as we happen to be talking about the clergy, will you allow me to speak to you in confidence?"

"Yes, I am listening to you."

"I could be more precise in what I am about to say by mentioning names, but discretion will not allow me to reveal them to you. I refer to a personage, and no one less than a member of your own entourage. To a priest who expressed himself surprised at the frequency of arrests among priests and religious, this politician answered: 'They are revenging themselves on the priests for the attitude taken up by the Cardinal.' Is that good-will? Is that justice?"

"Dear me; who can have said that?"

"You may ignore my confidence if you like; I have no wish to impose on your credulity. But I assert that I know the person we are talking about, and that the priest to whom he spoke, and who himself related this to me is absolutely a trustworthy witness."*

"3. You were saying, Baron, that his Excellency the Governor General finds it difficult to reconcile my habitual attitude with my frequent appeals to him in favor of my countrymen. You have not, I believe, uttered the word ingratitude, but it is the one which would sum up this fresh complaint. Well, I am going to astonish you and, I fear, hurt your feelings."

* NOTE—The personage referred to here is Trimborn, a Deputy of the Centre; and the priest he spoke to is the Superior of the "Aumoniers du Travail"—the Abbe Reyn.

In a note signed with his own hand, the Abbe Reyn asserts that in the course of a conversation he had with Trimborn, he heard the latter declare that the heavy penalties inflicted on Belgian priests were the German Government's reply to the Cardinal's activities.

To the Superior of the "Aumoniers du Travail," who asked for a reprieve for one of his priests who was ill and half blind and who had been condemned to three years' imprisonment, Trimborn replied that the Cardinal could easily obtain this favor, besides many others, if he would only go to Canossa and promise for the future to act differently vis-a-vis of the German Government.

"Not at all; say what you think."

"Well, Baron, I tell you frankly and beg you to repeat it to the Governor General. I have no gratitude toward you on the score you mention, because I owe you none."

"Oh! Oh!"

"Have a little patience; I will explain myself. There is a personal concession which you are willing to make me, and I am grateful for it. I mean the right to use a motor-car.

"But in regard to requests, rather frequent, addressed to the Governor General, I admit the only things I have met with have been refusals. I am quite accustomed to reading in the first sentence of the answer: 'Ich bedauere' (I regret). Things have come to such a pass, that when appeals are made for my intervention with the Governor General, I am obliged to answer, and as a rule I do answer: 'Dear Sir, or Madam, I should like to be of service to you, but I fear that I might do you more harm than good.'"

"But I still assert that his Excellency the Governor General is very well disposed."

"The matter is very simple. On your return to Brussels, refer to your records; and, if you can, confute me by telling me when and in what my requests have been acceded to.

"I remember a case which was particularly painful to me. A seminarist, the Abbe G. Van der Elst, in whom I took an affectionate interest, was threatened with condemnation for having helped some young men to pass the frontiers of Holland."

"Yes, I am acquainted with Abbe Van der Elst's case."

"They even dared to suggest the death penalty for acts which every patriot must in his heart admire.

"I was expecting, therefore, that the young seminarist would be condemned to prison, and in a pressing letter,* which I tried to make as respectful as possible, I had begged Baron von Bissing to declare that in case the young student were condemned, he might undergo the penalty in a Belgian

* NOTE—This intervention in favor of Abbe Van der Elst took place on July 4, 1915.

prison so that he might have help in the pursuit of his studies."

"But what happened then?"

"As if they were anxious to give me proof of wishing to lacerate my heart, G. Van der Elst was deported to Germany immediately after his condemnation; and to a lady who was weeping and pleading for a delay, saying: 'We know that the Cardinal of Malines has asked the Governor General to allow the condemned to do his sentence in St. Giles prison,' they answered: 'Nonsense; when he is in Germany he can always be sent back.'

"You see, Baron, that my debt of gratitude is not heavy.

"Only yesterday, I again addressed to the Governor General an appeal in favor of prisoners awaiting trial, especially the case of two religious, Fathers Quevit and Van Nylen, who are here in a dungeon at Malines, treated more harshly than those who are doing their sentence. I ask that they be allowed to say mass and to be looked upon only as accused men. I am curious to see what will be the upshot of my appeal."

"You are right in drawing my attention to these religious. I will look into your Eminence's appeal on my return to Brussels."

"I thank you."

4. The conversation about the bad treatment meted out to prisoners awaiting trial had taken a serious turn.

When he came to the fourth point, the Cardinal smiled.

"Baron," said he, "let us go through a little history. My pastoral letter is dated, if I remember right, the Feast of St. Matthew, that is to say, September 21st. You will admit, no doubt, that to arrange it, to have it printed, and to issue it to the clergy, a whole week was necessary. This brings us back to the 10th or 12th of September. At that date, the retreat of your troops had not yet taken place and, if I am well informed, our allies' offensive had not yet begun." *

"But you might have known it was coming."

"No, Baron, I did not know it. You are greatly mis-

* NOTE—The Anglo-French offensive opened on September 24.

taken about me. I am only a bishop and not more than a bishop; I am not in the secrets of our general headquarters.

"You do not understand me; you judge me falsely. I hope that till the end I shall have the courage to do my duty—the whole of my duty as pastor of souls; but I do not meddle with military affairs."

"Then your Eminence does not disown your resistance to the occupying power?"

"What resistance?"

"Notably that which you reveal in your last pastoral."

"Tell me, pray, where in it is resistance to the German authorities advocated? The Germans are not even once mentioned there."

"Not mentioned, no. But one can read between the lines."

"Oh! indeed, Baron; I am responsible for what I have written and signed, not, as you will admit, for what it pleases you to ascribe to me as the outcome of your suspicions."

"Nevertheless, we find that, taking their sermons as a whole, the clergy is more and more advocating resistance and meddling in politics."

"I have already asked more than once to be kindly told who, where, when and how."

"But your letter is itself an incentive to resistance."

"This, Baron, brings us back to our starting point; and I believe I have proved to you by facts that experience is against your unfair accusations.

"These words, politics, resistance, are vague; you should be more precise. If by 'resistance' you mean armed rebellion, recourse to violent measures, or inciting others to have recourse to them, then you are within your rights in forbidding us to resist; and we assert on our side, that in this sense we abstain from resistance.

"But if by resistance you understand the assertion of our rights, recourse to prayer, whether public or private, to obtain God's protection on our country and for the triumph of the sacred rights of patriotism—then, Baron, I am

obliged in conscience to tell you that I will continue to resist you without flinching."

"But, then?"

"Then?—you can do anything you please."

At these words Baron von der Lancken got up. "I shall leave," said he, "to make my report to the Governor General."

Before he went out of the parlor, he turned to the Cardinal.

"I should like also to say a word to you about a conversation which I have had with Canon Loncin, the diocesan secretary.

"One day a minister of the Imperial Government, passing by Malines, visited the Cathedral and asked if there were no way of concealing * or rather repairing the huge hole in the side wall and of making urgent repairs to prevent more serious dilapidations. I told M. Loncin that the German Government was ready to grant a subsidy for this purpose. I do not know whether M. Loncin told you the answer he brought me, but I was astounded. He told me that he did not believe that the 'conseil de fabrique'—I believe that is what you call the commission which deals with the temporalities of the church—was prepared to accept this offer. Nevertheless, I assure your Eminence that I had no afterthought. My intention was solely to manifest my interest in a work of art, a cathedral. I might have said to M. Loncin that if the Belgians did not want a subsidy because it came from German hands, then it is not the Germans who are acting as barbarians."

"Baron," replied the Cardinal, "I am not ignorant of the gracious offer which you made to my secretary in your Government's name, and we do not know how to thank you enough for it. But surely you see that the question of the restoration of our churches is somewhat premature. Malines Cathedral has suffered, no doubt, and I know it better than anybody, since every Sunday I am present at functions, no longer in the majestic building of yore, but in

* NOTE—The Baron seemed very concerned at having let escape the word "conceal," which badly disguised his thoughts.

a large hall closed in as a makeshift with boards. But there are some people who have been more sorely tried than those of Malines. There are many parishes which have no longer a church, where worship is performed in an improvised hall, in a school, or clubrooms. That is where help is needed first and foremost."

"Yes; but I do not speak of a new building. I know well that the subsidy we can offer you would not be sufficient for that; but we were thinking of the most urgent repairs necessary to a monument of art such as is your Cathedral."

"The exact estimate has not been made—it is impossible to make it now—as to what the repairs of our metropolitan church would cost; but I am assured that the work would cost over a million francs; in which case, what do you expect to do toward it with a few thousand marks? The work in view is a considerable one which must be done according to plan and not piecemeal. It would be premature to set about the work at once.

"M. Loncin must have told you that the 'conseil de fabrique,' of which I am president in my own right, is made up of seven members; and he added, as he told me, that if I were to vote for the subsidy you have been kind enough to offer us the other members would vote against it. To be frank with you, I believe that M. Loncin has spoken the truth. We Belgians are indeed fastidious; we claim our rights, but we do not like favors."

The interview ended with this statement, made with a smile, but in a firm, decided tone.

CHAPTER XVIII

TREATMENT OF RELIGIOUS AWAITING TRIAL IN THE MILITARY PRISONS AT MALINES AND AT LOUVAIN

SEVERAL religious prosecuted for having abetted recruiting for the Belgian army in occupied territory had been, in consequence of the prisons being full, thrown into military cells at Malines and Louvain. Kept in the most rigorous seclusions; deprived, in spite of Von Bissing's promise, of the consolation of saying mass, the prioners had to pass the whole day long in a wretched narrow cell without windows and into which air and light could only enter through chinks left between planks forming the ceiling.

The Cardinal, being informed of this severe treatment, asked Von Bissing to mitigate in some way this cruel state of affairs. He interceded on behalf of Fathers Quevit, O. P., and Van Nylen, S. J., Devroye, S. J., Mertens, S. J.

In each case the Governor General showed himself ready to meet the Cardinal's appeal. He even went so far as to answer him by wire that his wishes would be acceded to. But his good intentions, real or apparent, had no effect. The Kreischefs of Malines and Louvain, on being requested by the Governor General to give him some information about the religious in question, sent back lying reports affirming that the prisoners had made no complaint. Von Bissing, on the strength of these reports, told the Cardinal that he had been making groundless complaints and he even reproached him with being ill-informed of what went on in the prisons. The Cardinal refused to be discomfited. In his letters of November 6th and 12th he returned to the charge and proved without doubt that the Kreischef's reports were inaccurate.

The conditions of the prisoners continued unchanged in

spite of the Cardinal's pressing and repeated endeavors. On one point alone did he obtain satisfaction. After negotiations, which went on for more than three weeks, arrangements were made by the German military administration for priests and religious detained under suspicion to say mass in prison.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
October 7th, 1915.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—I consider it my duty to call your kind attention to a state of affairs existing at Malines and about which I feel sure you have no knowledge.

Two priests, both of them religious, Father Quevit, a Dominican, and Father Van Nylen, a Jesuit, are being detained on suspicion, the latter during the last few days, the former for seven weeks, in a dungeon of the Malines prison. They are deprived of holy mass, are condemned to a life of complete idleness, and altogether pass their days in demoralizing surroundings.

That needful measures should be taken to prevent the escape of the prisoners, one can understand; but surely your Excellency does not wish to impose upon them worse punishment than what condemned criminals have to suffer.

I put the situation before your Excellency with confidence, and I beg you to accept the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

Governor General of Belgium, Brussels,
P. No. 18495. *October 13th,* 1915.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

In reply to your Eminence's esteemed letter dated 7th instant, I have the honor to inform you that I have given immediate orders for Father Quevit and Father Van Nylen to be treated in accordance with their rank. I have, therefore, arranged for them to be able to say mass during the

time their case is being judicially investigated, also for them to be treated in all things in a manner becoming their station and to be given all such freedom as is compatible with their position as prisoners awaiting trial.

I offer your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem and I have the honor to be your devoted servant.

(Signed) BARON VON BISSING,
Major General.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
October 15th, 1915.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—I thank your Excellency for the kind feelings shown in the letter with which you honored me under date 13th instant.—P. No. 18495.

Since the day on which I intervened with your Excellency on behalf of the Rev. Fathers Quevit and Van Nylen, the former has been condemned to be deported to Germany. The latter is detained in the Lancers' barracks at Malines and is being forced, I am assured, to follow the common life of a prisoner; and that yesterday, Friday, he had not as yet obtained the authorization which your Excellency was kind enough to lead him to expect; that, namely, to say mass.

I have no doubt that your Excellency's instructions in this respect will be promptly carried out.

Accept, sir, the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

Governor General's Office, Brussels,
P. 20001. *October 30th,* 1915.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

Your Eminence's last letter dated October 15th, 1915, greatly astonished me, for it has been proved that my orders have been carried out without the least hitch.

The necessary steps were taken immediately for imprisoned priests to say mass. Exceptions to the prison routine

had already been made previously in favor of ecclesiastics, in the sense that they were treated in a way worthy of their rank; quite a number of exceptional permissions had already been granted them. The priests we are speaking of have never made a request nor offered any complaint, but to the questions put them they replied that they desired nothing. Your Eminence must have received information of an altogether false character to think yourself justified in reproaching me for the manner in which ecclesiastics are being treated. I inclose with my letter a copy of a report which the Kreischef of Malines made in obedience to my order; your Eminence will find therein a proof of my contention.

I beg your Eminence to confirm my statement that you have been misinformed regarding the treatment hitherto meted out to ecclesiastics.

I offer your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem and I have the honor to be your devoted servant.

(Signed) BARON VON BISSING,
Major General.

COPY

The Imperial Kreischef, Brussels,
Tgb. No. 97. *October 27th*, 1915.

To the Military Government of Antwerp.

In reply to the order received by telephone today, following on the telephonic order of the 19th instant and the written order of the 11th instant, relative to the manner in which ecclesiastics awaiting trial are treated, I make the following declaration:

Among those incarcerated at the Malines prison, there were to be found on the 10th of this month two ecclesiastics, Fathers Quevit and Van Nylen. Father Quevit, sentenced to two and one-half years' penal servitude for attempted military treason, was, following on the order of the 11th inst., which I have mentioned above, deported to Germany. Father Van Nylen, who is likewise under strong suspicion of military treason and who is still for the present detained on suspicion under guard of the military police, has

had during his sojourn here a room to himself. He is treated with all the deference due to his rank; every possible facility—long walks, permission to write, to receive and pay visits, good food, etc.—has been given him. The facts have been corroborated by the Kreisant and the military police. We have always tried to avoid bringing ecclesiastics into contact with common prisoners. At the Lancers' barracks there are practically none but political prisoners; they are watched only to prevent their communication with one another.

Thus Father Van Nylen, in reply to all the questions put him by the head of the police as to any complaints he might have to make, has always declared that he desired nothing more than what he already had.

He has never made any request to say mass, nor has Father Quevit during the whole of his stay ever manifested this desire. The Father Provincial and prior of all the Dominican monasteries in Belgium in the course of his numerous visits to the police station has never mentioned the matter.

That is the reason why no steps have ever been taken to fit up a room for the celebration of holy mass.

The execution of the order of October 11th, 1915, was fraught with certain difficulties, for we had no suitable or appropriate place at our disposal. We had also to meet the difficulty of surveillance. We had to take into account the scarcity of guards and the fact also that five prisoners had already succeeded in escaping from the barracks.

After frequent negotiations with the Catholic chaplain Gierlichs, a room possessing all the requirements for a chapel has been fitted up at the Lancers' barracks. We have considered the requests made me by the chaplain during a conversation I had with him; we have obtained for him thirty chairs, four benches, a chandelier and a big stove.

For the time being, the question of servers at mass is still in suspense. The priest wanted to have as server a prisoner who is detained on suspicion after trying to pass the frontier. For easily understood reasons, this permis-

sion cannot be granted. A Catholic soldier has been appointed to fulfill this office.

The Kreischef.

(Signed) JOCHMUS,
Colonel.

The report of the Kreischef is full of inaccuracies and errors. Father Van Nylen, he says, had a room all to himself: that is to say, he was lodged in a filthy military dungeon like all the others. At broad noon one could not see inside of it; the only light there was came in through crevices in the iron beams supporting the ceiling.

The prisoners' walks took place in a little back yard fifteen yards in length. They lasted at first half an hour, later on an hour. When the time for a walk came the father had to repair to the yard, no matter what the weather might be.

He never asked to say mass, affirms the report. That is false. At the German chaplain's first visit, Father Van Nylen put his painful case before him, insisting especially on his privation of holy mass. The chaplain went to the Kommandantur; but there he was told that they could not grant imprisoned priests facilities for saying mass. Only after three weeks, following a visit from the Governor General's chaplain, did Father Van Nylen receive the much-desired permission.

One day the Kreischef himself went to the prisoner's cell and asked if he had any complaints to make. The father told him that it was against all law to keep any one in prison on suspicion for three months in a dungeon where only young soldiers were confined and that for only a few days. The only answer he had was the Kreischef's assertion that it was Belgians who had built this dungeon and that there were no other places at his disposal.

The Kreischef excels in audacity when he asserts in his report that Father Van Nylen "has always declared that he desired nothing more than what he already had."

The Cardinal, in his letter of November 6th, puts things in their true perspective and cleared himself of von

Bissing's allegation that he was misinformed regarding what took place in the prisons alluded to.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
November 6th, 1915.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—On November 1st I received the letter P. 20001 with which your Excellency honored me dated October 30th. In it you express the opinion that the information contained in my letters of October 7th and 16th about the conditions under which Fathers Quevit and Van Nylen are imprisoned is without foundation.

I cannot do better than put the facts before your Excellency and give you the precise dates. Then you yourself will see that it is the unvarnished truth.

My first letter is dated October 7th. In it I told your Excellency that Fathers Quevit and Van Nylen, though merely under suspicion, were being kept in a dungeon. I asked for a mitigation of their lot and facilities for saying mass.

Very kindly on October 13th your Excellency wrote to me that as the result of orders given immediately by you, the priests' accommodation would without delay be altered to suit their dignity and that steps would be taken to enable them to say mass so long as the judicial investigation of their case lasted.

I had all the more reason to hope that the two religious would not have to wait long before enjoying the improvement asked for, because, on the occasion of a visit he paid me on October 8th, the Baron von der Lancken seemed disposed to second my request to your Excellency.

This is what actually took place: On Saturday, October 9th, in any case, so I am assured, certainly before October 13th, Father Quevit was taken out of his dungeon to be tried, was found guilty and immediately deported to Germany. Therefore, neither did he know anything about a mitigation of his sentence nor had he the satisfaction of saying mass.

As regards Father Van Nylen, after having been shut up on July 31st in a dungeon at the barracks in Louvain and then transferred to the jail of the same town, he was imprisoned in a dungeon at the Lancers' barracks in Malines on October 2d. On October 26th he was still there and had not as yet obtained leave to say mass.

It was only on Monday the 25th that the provincial military chaplain, Father Gierlichs, came to me with the news that leave was going to be given to Father Van Nylen to say mass, but that the requisites for this purpose did not exist at the barracks. Immediately a secretary from the Archbishop's House, Canon Van Olmen, was commissioned to procure all the necessary requisites; a building was prepared on the 26th and on the 27th the father had the consolation of saying his first mass in prison. Since the 27th your Excellency's orders concerning the celebration of mass have been carried out.

Relying on a report dated October 27th of the Kreischef M. Jochmus, your Excellency reproaches me with having complained without reason of the treatment meted out to religious detained in prison. Your Excellency expresses yourself as follows: "Your Eminence must therefore have been quite misinformed when you think it right to reproach me with the way in which the clergy is being treated."

Nevertheless, truth compels me to uphold the correctness of my communications.

I have questioned several witnesses whose good faith is beyond all cavil, who have themselves gone through life in the dungeon here or have been allowed to enter one on the occasion of a visit to the prisoners.

This is substantially what they declare: The room which the prisoners are shut up in is very narrow and badly ventilated; there is neither table nor chair to be found in it; in general, there is not the cleanliness there should be; there is hardly any light; a witness who occupied the cell in the middle of summer asserts that then he could hardly read between 10 a. m. and 2 p. m.; Father Van Nylen has, during the few weeks of his detention, used as a makeshift at

least two dozen candles. Under these circumstances the prisoners find themselves condemned to a sort of stagnation, to enforced idleness and to an oppressive boredom; and from 3 or 4 p. m. till the next morning they remain perforce reclining on a mattress, if a friend has been good enough to supply them with one, otherwise on a bed of straw. Every one must admit that such a regime is demoralizing.

And when one considers that several of those who are enduring for weeks or even for months at a time these mental tortures and these privations have not been tried and have not been declared guilty, but are merely awaiting trial; when one knows that the accusations brought against them relate to acts which the Government no doubt has a strict right to prevent, but which are none the less required by a patriotism which calls for respect, one cannot help thinking that your Excellency must be ignorant of the abuses which are committed under cover of your authority; and one cannot give up hoping that, when better informed, you will no longer tolerate such things.

It is possible that Father Van Nylen's fate will soon be decided. But, if I have intervened in the case of two religious who had a special claim to my protection, nevertheless I should like your Excellency to extend your benevolence to all prisoners not yet found guilty.

Please accept, sir, the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

Hardly had the preceding letter been dispatched when the Cardinal learned of the arrest of Fathers Devroye and Mertens, S. J. He immediately intervened on their behalf to obtain favorable conditions for their internment.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
November 7th, 1915.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—At the risk of importuning your Excellency, I find myself obliged to supplement my letter of yesterday. I

have just had news of the condemnation of the Rev. Father Van Nylen and also of the internment of Father Devroye in a dungeon at Malines barracks. This excellent man, Father Devroye, is a friend and cousin of mine. It is painful for me to think that he had to pass Saturday night last on straw in an unhealthy cell such as I described to your Excellency yesterday.

I learn on good authority that Father Mertens, of Brussels, has been put into a cell at Louvain under the same conditions.

Again I appeal to your Excellency's humane and just feelings.

Father Devroye suffers from very poor health; I beg of your Excellency to send a doctor to him as soon as possible to examine him. He could not bear up long under the treatment he is undergoing.

Accept, your Excellency, the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

Two days after, von Bissing sent the Cardinal from his residence at Trois Fontaines the following telegram:

Trois Fontaines,
November 9th, 1915.

Cardinal Mercier, Malines.

In accordance with your Eminence's wish, I have given orders by telephone for an improvement to be carried out in the treatment of the imprisoned priests referred to in your letter.

The Governor General.

(Signed) Baron von Bissing,
Major General.

The Cardinal hastened to thank von Bissing for the kindness shown by him to the religious in prison awaiting trial:

Archbishop's House, Malines,
November 10th, 1915.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—Your Excellency has been kind enough to assure me by wire last night that religious imprisoned under suspicion would for the future have better accommodations. I am very grateful to you for this assurance, and I take the liberty to insist that all suspected prisoners should be treated with the same fairness.

This very evening the news has reached me that a civilian prisoner in poor health, M. Wasnair, whom I had the honor to recommend to your Excellency, has been restored to his family.

For this I am grateful to your Excellency, and beg you to accept the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

The Governor General forwarded to his Eminence a copy of the Kreischef of Malines's report on the conditions of Father Devroye's internment.

Governor General of Belgium, Brussels,
November 10th, 1915.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

As a sequel to my wire of yesterday, I have the honor to inclose herewith the copy of a report from the Kreischef of Malines and a bulletin of the army medical service about Father Devroye, who is detained under suspicion in the prison of this town. From these documents it is clear that the priest interested has no ground of complaint against the treatment to which he is subjected, that he is well and quite capable of undergoing the prison regime.

About Father Mertens, imprisoned at Louvain, notice has been given me through the telephone that he was in the same condition as Father Devroye. I have not yet received the written report. I intend to pass it on to you immediately when I receive it.

I present to your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem and have the honor to be your very devoted servant.

(Signed) BARON VON BISSING,
Major General.

Copy of the Kreischef's report inclosed with the preceding letter:

Kreischef's Office, Malines,
No. 7049 II. *November 10th, 1915.*

To the General Government of Belgium, Brussels.

In execution of the order communicated to me by telephone on November 9th, 1915, I forward herewith a medical report on the state of health of Father Devroye interned in the military prison at Malines.

At the time the doctor was drawing up his report, an officer of the "Kreisamt" visited the cell in which Father Devroye was lodged.

The cell is 3.20 meters long, 1.95 meters broad and 4 meters high. The walls are whitewashed with lime. Father Devroye is not obliged to sleep, as has been said, on straw placed immediately on the floor, but he has at his disposal a camp bedstead furnished with a straw mattress. He has only slept one night on this mattress. The day following his arrival at the prison, the 7th instant, he received a hair mattress which he uses still. A sufficient number of clean woolen blankets have been given him, as is proved by the fact that he has sent one back.

The warming of the cell is secured by a stove placed in the corridor of the prison. At the time of the visit to the prisoner the temperature there was sufficient. A warmer cell nearer to the stove was offered to Father Devroye. He refused it, saying that his was sufficiently heated. The lighting at night comes from a lamp attached to the wall.

The inquiry has proved that Father Devroye is treated with the deference due to his rank. The head of the local military police asked him whether there was anything he wanted done. The father answered that he was content,

had no complaints to make about the food and was satisfied with his state of health. That his health is excellent is proved by the fact that during his interview with the Cardinal he remained standing for three-quarters of an hour before an open window, and on a remark being made about this, he said he was well and had no need for a scarf.

I would also remark that the prison where those detained on suspicion are confined formerly served as a jail for Belgian soldiers. The fitting up of the cells dates only a few years back. It answers to all hygienic requirements.

(Signed) JOCHMUS,
Colonel and Kreischef.

The medical bulletin signed by Doctor Groos affirmed that Father Devroye was in good health and capable of enduring prison life.

This report of the Kreischef's is just as inaccurate as that which the Governor General sent previously about the conditions under which Father Van Nylen was interned.

The Cardinal was authorized to visit Father Devroye. They were ashamed to take him to the prisoner's cell, as had nevertheless been done a few days previously for Father Thibaut, provincial of the Society of Jesus. The interview took place in a hall of the barracks which served as a chapel. Father Devroye did not remain standing for three-quarters of an hour before an open window, as the Kreischef asserted; but the prisoner and his visitor sat on a common bench without a back which happened to be near at hand.

Far from refusing a scarf, Father Devroye accepted eagerly everything that could protect him from the cold, for the fire in the corridor only served to warm the sentry.

It is ironical to say that the father sent back a blanket because he had too many. The Kreischef, no doubt, means the filthy rag which the father was obliged to make the best of for the first night and which was replaced subsequently with blankets sent to him from the residency.

As regards the lamp, it never existed save in the imagination of the Kreischef. Father Devroye had to find the light himself with a few candles he had managed to procure.

The walls of the cell, says the report, were whitewashed with lime. It would have been more exact to say that they "had been whitewashed with lime," for the white color was entirely hidden by dust and spiders' webs.

The Cardinal, in acknowledging the report, set it down at its true value:

Archbishop's House, Malines,
November 12th, 1915.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—Yesterday afternoon I received the letter dated November 10th in which your Excellency tries to reassure me about the health of Father Devroye and the conditions under which he is imprisoned.

The Kreischef Jochmus's report, inclosed with your Excellency's letter, contains several points which call for remark. I noted at the first time of reading certain inaccuracies on which I have on other occasions passed comment.

Would your Excellency like a specimen?

It is said that during our interview, lasting three-quarters of an hour, which your Excellency was kind enough to grant me with Father Devroye, the latter was standing in front of an open window: "dass er bei mit dem Kardinal gefuehrten Unterredung ¾ Std. lang am offenen Fenster gestanden hat" (during his interview with the Cardinal, he remained standing for three-quarters hour before an open window).

In this case, at all events, I can speak from personal knowledge. During that three-quarters of an hour Father Devroye was seated on my left in a closed room.

Father Van Duerm, who accompanied me on this visit, is ready to confirm my statement.

The room where we held our meeting was that in which the father had been able to say mass that morning. The windows of this room look on to a public square, and we were able as we went in and out to perceive five or six soldiers conversing together.

Is it for a moment to be admitted that in an intimate conversation with a relative and a friend we should have exchanged confidences near an open window within earshot of an undiscerning and profane audience?

I thank your Excellency for the relaxation you have granted in the treatment of Fathers Devroye and Mertens and beg you to accept the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

After the condemnation of Fathers Devroye and Van Nylen, von Bissing told his Eminence that he could not make use of his right of reprieve in the case of Father Van Nylen, but that he granted to Father Devroye a partial reprieve:

Governor General's Office, Brussels,
IIIb. T. L. No. 7465. *November* 13*th*, 1915.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

As regards the sentences passed in due legal manner on Father Rector Devroye and Father Van Nylen, I have the honor to communicate the following:

Father Devroye has been sentenced in the first place to a year's imprisonment for having abetted the escape from Belgium, without the necessary authorization, of a young Belgian, George Wahis, aged seventeen, and, secondly, to three months' imprisonment for having, as director of an educational establishment, organized in his classes during the occupation anti-German propaganda. Considering, however, that in the Wahis affair the accusation was grounded on the assertions of a young man, and that the latter, in the course of the various judicial examinations he had to undergo, made statements somewhat vague and of a contradictory character, and that in consequence the guilt of Father Devroye cannot be proved with any certitude, I agree on this ground to remit the penalty to which the accused has been sentenced. On the other hand, it has been proved beyond doubt that Father Devroye organized in the educational establishment confided to his care anti-German propa-

ganda.* Similar acts within the reach of a professor who can exercise influence over youths appear to me altogether of a nature to favor the spread of views which, in the interests of the defense of the realm, cannot be tolerated in occupied territory. To my great regret, I cannot alter the penalty inflicted on Father Devroye under this head.

Again, as regards Father Van Nylen, the facts of which he is accused were fully established during the trial and his guilt proved to a certainty. I am sorry not to have been able up to now to make use of my right of granting him a reprieve.

Your devoted servant,

(Signed) BARON VON BISSING,
Major General and Governor General.

The Cardinal thanked von Bissing as follows:

Archbishop's House, Malines,
November 17th, 1915.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—The letter with which your Excellency has honored me dated November 13th brings me the news that Father Devroye has been granted a partial reprieve. I am glad of this good news and am deeply grateful to your Excellency for it.

At the end of your letter, your Excellency says that you have not as yet been able to make use of your prerogative in favor of Father Van Nylen. The remark "not as yet" leaves room for hope.

Please accept, sir, the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

The Cardinal had already intervened in favor of Father Mertens, S. J., arrested on the charge of having abetted

* NOTE—The pretext for bringing this accusation against Fr. Devroye was that the German detectives, during their official visit of the premises of St. Michael's College, came upon some exercises done by the pupils, which they had illustrated with French and English flags.

Belgians of military age in passing the frontier. Von Bissing, according to the promise he made in his letter of November 10th, communicated to his Eminence the report of Luebbert, Kreischef of Louvain, on the conditions of the said prisoner's internment:

Government General of Belgium, Brussels,
P. N. 21726. *November 24th*, 1915.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

I have the honor to send your Eminence herewith a copy of the Kreischef of Louvain's report regarding the condition of Father Mertens's internment, who is detained on suspicion in the prison of this town. I am also sending you under the same cover a copy of the result of a medical examination of his state of health.

At the same time, I take the liberty of informing you that I have drawn up the scheme of an order whose purpose is to secure for priests detained on suspicion conditions consonant with their rank. Nevertheless, I would observe that in small places we often lack for prisoners awaiting trial such suitable quarters as I certainly desire and as I shall do my best to secure.

I should be exceedingly glad if in future I were spared the duty of having to arrest priests on the charge of having infringed existing laws and my decrees.

I offer your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem and have the honor to be your devoted servant.

(Signed) BARON VON BISSING,
Major General.

Copy of the Kreischef of Louvain's report inclosed with the preceding letter:

NOTICE

Kreisamt of Louvain,
Louvain, 9th November, 1915.

The priest Mertens has been arrested at the request of the criminal police and is detained on suspicion since the

3rd instant in a dungeon at the infantry barracks. He is under grave suspicion of having obtained recruits for the enemy army among Belgians of military age.

He is lodged in a cell that no one can complain of. He has a woolen mattress, blankets and a pillow. He enjoys all the liberty allowed prisoners awaiting trial. He has leave to order his own meals, to read and to write; he may walk in the yard for an hour in the morning and an hour in the afternoon; his cell is lighted, and he has a table and a chair at his disposal.

To my question whether he had any complaints to make or whether he was ill, he answered me "No." He has never complained of ill-usage.

The medical certificate regarding Father Mertens's state of health is inclosed with this letter.

(Signed) LUEBBERT,
Colonel and Kreischef.

The medical certificate testified that Father Mertens's health was good enough to allow him to undergo prison regime.

The report signed by the Kreischef from the point of view of inaccuracy yields in nothing to the report addressed to the Governor General by the Kreischef of Malines and which we have treated of above.

The cell, "which no one could complain of," as Father Mertens tells us, was in reality a dungeon reserved for drunkards and insubordinate soldiers. A Belgian soldier could not lodge there for more than three days without special permission from superior authority. Father Mertens stayed there thirty days. The dungeon had become a veritable dog-hole. It reeked with a nauseous smell, and the floor was so dirty that it was impossible to make out the color of the flags. No means of heating; no windows, not even bull's-eyes. The air and light only penetrated this hovel through cracks in the ceilings made of iron beams.

The so-called woolen mattress was a finger's breadth in thickness and as hard as the plank on which it rested. For covering a filthy, stained rag; for pillow a beam. For

nourishment the prisoner received three times a day some bad bread and a kind of black broth as little appetizing as possible.

Luebbert, the Kreischef, paid a visit to Father Mertens. He was indignant at the way the prisoner was treated, saying that it was not right to subject a priest to so humiliating a regime. He allowed a pillow to be brought him, a traveling rug and to receive regularly the food supplied by the College of Louvain. Luebbert always showed himself well disposed toward Father Mertens. He was, moreover, according to all the Belgians who had any dealings with him, a just and a loyal man. For this reason Father Mertens thinks that the report addressed to the Governor General was drawn up by the police and that the Kreischef must have signed it without even taking the trouble to read it.

The Cardinal, always hoping that the good intentions which von Bissing seemed to show would end by having some good effect, thanked him for the steps he had taken to better the treatment of priests detained in prison:

Archbishop's House, Malines,
November 28th, 1915.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—I have the honor to acknowledge your Excellency's letter No. 21726 concerning Father Mertens's detention.

I am particularly obliged to your Excellency for the arrangements you have ordered to be made so that ecclesiastics imprisoned under suspicion may receive the treatment due to their dignity. May I express the wish that all persons under suspicion, lay as well as ecclesiastic, should reap the benefit of your good will? From the judicial standpoint, indeed, the situation is exactly the same. They have not been found guilty and therefore should not be treated as such.

Accept, sir, the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
December 9th, 1915.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—I thank your Excellency with all my heart for the promise you made me in your letter of December 4th—No. 22489*—that in future imprisoned priests either awaiting their trial or actually interned shall be treated as becomes their dignity.

If I have pressed your Excellency to obtain for laymen also during the period of investigation prior to their trial the benefit of a milder regime, it is not because I want to enter upon a discussion of this matter with your Excellency, but simply for the reason that equity and charity urge me to make an appeal to the prerogative, which I should like to share with your Excellency, of being able to alleviate my brethren's sufferings.

Accept, my dear Governor General, the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

*Note—This letter was never found.

CHAPTER XIX

SERMONS PREACHED BY THE CLERGY

In his interview with the Cardinal concerning the pastoral "An Appeal to Prayer," Baron von der Lancken had already complained in the Governor General's name of the abuse which, according to him, priests made of the liberty of speech granted them. The Cardinal having asked for precise details, the Baron answered that he did not wish to bring about a discussion on this subject, as he had not brought with him the documents in possession of the General Government incriminating a number of priests.

Time and again Von Bissing returned to this subject. Setting aside the generalities to which he had confined himself hitherto, he accused by name certain priests of giving vent in their sermons to strong feelings of a political character:

Governor General's Office, Brussels,
November 6th, 1915.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.*

In consequence of verbal representations made recently by the head of the political department, I take the liberty to point out to your Eminence that priests continue, when preaching, to abuse the liberty given them as ministers of worship. Among the numerous cases which have been brought to my notice I will only put forward the following:

At the Lourdes grotto, at Laeken, preachers are continually uttering political manifestoes. On October 14th

*Note—The original of this letter has not been found. There only exists one translation of it in the archives of the Archbishop's house.

one of them went so far as to touch openly and directly on the recruiting of the Belgian army. His words must have been understood by young Belgians as an invitation to disobey my orders, about the sense of which there could be no doubt. The preacher gave it out as certain that 12 per cent only of the Brussels people fit for military service had rejoined the army, while 80 per cent of the province had passed over the frontier and had enlisted. The preacher knew what he was doing, for he knew of young people who had been punished for violating my decrees.

As I have declared several times to your Eminence, I think that the guilt of these priests deserves some extenuation from the fact that they feel themselves encouraged by the formal or tacit consent of their ecclesiastical superiors. Nevertheless, I shall be forced to make the preacher of the Laeken sermon responsible if a stop is not put to those inconsiderate proceedings in some other way. Consequently, I beg your Eminence to let me know whether I may count on some disciplinary measure being taken by ecclesiastical authority. I believe I have this right. I have waived my claim to exact from each member of the clergy a declaration of loyalty, confiding as I did in the pledge given by your Eminence and on your guaranteeing the peaceful attitude of the clergy.

I offer to your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem and have the honor to be your devoted servant.

(Signed) BARON VON BISSING,
Major General.

His Eminence replied to the Governor General's remonstrances in his letter of November 27th.

Government General of Belgium, Brussels,
P. A. I. 9529. *November 10th,* 1915.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

Your Eminence will not be surprised if I raise a violent protest against the sermon which the Rev. Cardyn preached at Brussels in St. Gudule on the occasion of the service for

Belgian soldiers killed in the war. In the Flemish text especially, this sermon shows an abuse of the liberty granted to the ministers of worship.

As your Eminence assisted at this service, I can dispense myself from giving precise details about the matter of this sermon; but I must nevertheless express my surprise that such language was used in your presence. I venture to hope that the preacher Cardyn will have to give an account of his action to the ecclesiastical authorities and that a guarantee will be given me that such an abuse will not be repeated.

I present to your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem and have the honor to be your devoted servant.

(Signed) BARON VON BISSING,
Major General.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
November 12th, 1915.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General of Belgium.

Sir—Your Excellency's dispatch, dated November 10th, No. 9529, was delivered to me yesterday and I hasten to send you an acknowledgment of it.

It is no longer possible for me to send for the Abbe Cardyn at the Archbishop's House before I leave for Rome,* but I will ask my administrator to act as an interpreter of my wishes in this regard, and on my return to Belgium I shall deem it my duty to give him detailed instructions.

Accept, your Excellency, the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed)[1] D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

* NOTE—The Cardinal meant to go a few days later to Rome whither he had just been called by His Holiness, Pope Benedict XV. But when he discovered that the passport given him by the German authorities said nothing about his return, he put off his journey and before answering the call of the Holy Father he desired to secure guaranties that would allow him to return to Belgium with as much ease as he had been allowed to leave it. He did not start for Rome till January 12, 1916.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
November 27th, 1915.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—I have just this moment received your Excellency's dispatch, No. 9742, dated November 24th, and I hasten to answer it.*

I have made inquiries about the sermon preached at the Lourdes Grotto at Jette St. Pierre on October 14th. The preacher inveighed against the frivolous spirit which draws to the cinema and worldly pleasures young men whose right place was elsewhere, viz., at the service of their country. He did, in fact, at this part of his sermon give some statistics. He said that at the time of the enrollment of volunteers in our army 12 per cent of the young men of Brussels had enlisted, while there were 80 per cent who came from the country. The very precision of the figures shows that the orator had in view the enrollment of young men before the German occupation, for on what source would he have relied for giving figures of recruiting at the present time?

I will look into the case of the Rev. Mr. Swalus, although the accusation brought against him by your Excellency is exceedingly vague; also the case of the Rev. Wittemberg.

But I am now in a position to assert that the Vicaire Mussche did not preach in the church in the Chaussee de Waterloo on October 24th and that there is no such priest as Carpentier attached to that church.

Accept, dear Governor General, the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

* Note—This dispatch has not been found. As can be gathered from the Cardinal's letter of December 3rd, the Governor General came back on the complaints which he had already stated in his dispatches of November 6th and 10th and brought up fresh accusations against the Reverends Swalus, Carpentier, Mussche and Wittemberg.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
December 3rd, 1915.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—I am now in a position to complete the information I had the honor of addressing your Excellency on November 27th in answer to your letter, No. 9742, dated November 24th.

In that letter your Excellency mentioned the sermons preached on October 14th by the Rev. Swalus at Laeken (Jette St. Pierre), and by the Rev. Cardyn at Ste. Gudule on November 8th. You there censured the sermons preached October 31st by the Cure Swalus at Laeken and October 24th by the Revs. Carpentier and Mussche in the Church of Ste. Alice at Schaerbeek.

The explanations I had the honor to give your Excellency in my letter of November 27th regarding the sermon of October 24th ought to have satisfied your Excellency; this same letter put the case of the Revs. Carpentier and Mussche out of question, as they did not preach on October 24th.

There remain the cases of the Rev. Swalus (October 31st), the Rev. Cardyn (November 8th) and the Rev. Wittemberg.

The Cure Swalus, whom I questioned yesterday at Brussels, tells me that he has been summoned several times to the Kommandantur during the last few days and that he has in vain demanded to be brought face to face with his accusers. He wished the grievances articled against him to be drawn up in detail, in order that he might give a straightforward explanation. He was answered that his accusers are no longer here. In reality, it was not he, but Pere Melet who preached on October 31st in the Church of the Chaussee de Waterloo. As a matter of fact, the Rev. Father's sermon had for its sole subject a theme which was as far removed as it could be from our earthly conflicts, viz., "The Beatific Vision." Not one word passed the lips of the Rev. Father which could give offense to the most susceptible of his hearers. As a guarantee of this statement

I have several witnesses altogether worthy of belief, who were present at the sermon and were capable of thoroughly understanding it.

It is less easy to answer the scruples of your Excellency about the preaching of the Revs. Cardyn and Wittemberg, because neither your dispatch of the 6th nor that of the 24th brings forward any definite complaint.

The dispatch of November 4th says that some Catholics, offended in their religious sentiments by a sermon of the Vicaire Wittemberg at Ste. Alice, left the church before the end of the sermon. I had an opportunity of seeing Mr. Wittemberg but was unable to get at the bottom of the matter for want of anything definite which the German authorities think they can bring against him. If these Catholics hesitate, which I can understand, to tell a lay power what it was that troubled their conscience, would they be unwilling to come forward and confide it to their bishop?

They know that they have no reprisals to fear on our part and that we have no interest in abusing their confidence.

As regards the sermon of November 8th at Ste. Gudule, I believe I can put my finger on what gave your Excellency cause for anxiety. A German of high standing said to a trustworthy person, who repeated it to me, that the Abbe Cardyn had compared Germany to a prostitute. As a matter of fact, this person was led into error by a spy who heard the word "prostitution," and applied it in a distorted sense. I heard the preacher myself. He denounced a few wretched wights who, instead of joining in the general mourning of the country, unmindful of their brothers, father or husband fighting for them, hand themselves over shamefully to the enemy.

I do not wish to end this letter without thanking your Excellency for being so good as to accede to my desire, expressed at sundry times, of seeing myself intrusted with the control of priests suspected of having lacked in respect for the dignity of their ministry.

Accept, dear Governor General, the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
December 11th, 1915.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—I do not know whether your Excellency thinks your letter No. 10182 still requires an answer from me.*

As far as I am concerned, I have only one word to add, by way of conclusion, to my preceding letters.

Your Excellency has written me that I have passed over in silence the Abbe Cardyn's sermon at Ste. Gudule. If your Excellency will take the trouble to reread my last letter, you will discover your error. The only objection which the German authorities have, to my knowledge, brought forward against this sermon is grounded on an equivocation which I have laid bare.

I have summoned the priests whose names were mentioned in your Excellency's letter; I have listened to their versions, and I have let them know what my views were, and consequently what their own views must be about their ministry. I pledge myself, therefore, for the correctness of their behavior: "Burgschaft fur korrektes Verhalten der Geistlichkeit" (Surely guarantee for the behavior of the clergy).

Your Excellency can rest assured that the clergy is not inciting the people to sedition. One year's experience must have convinced you that not one of the ugly prophecies put forward so often by those round you has been realized. Since the time our provinces have been occupied is there a single Belgian who has played a low trick on a German soldier?

Belgian folk are steadfast, but self-respecting in their patriotism, and the Belgian clergy is no stranger to this calm and noble attitude.

* This letter has not been found.

Accept, dear Governor General, the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

Government General of Belgium, Brussels,
P. A. I. No. 10637. *December 15th,* 1915.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

Your Eminence's esteemed letter of December 3rd crossed that which I sent you the following day. I have duly received your correspondence of the 11th. I have no intention to enter into detailed discussions of the sermons censured, though, e. g., in the summing up of Cardyn's case I cannot altogether see eye to eye with your Eminence. I insist above all on putting an end to all future abuses of liberty of worship.

It was a pleasure to me to hear that your Eminence sent instructions in this sense to certain ecclesiastics and that you pledge your word anew for the behavior of all the clergy. I rejoice thereat and hope that in this way priests will for the future confine themselves within the bounds of their religious mission, without my having to take steps, which, in the interest of the Church, I would rather avoid.

At the same time, I deem it my duty to make some observations on some of the propositions which have escaped your Eminence. I cannot share your way of thinking when you assert that the behavior adopted hitherto by the clergy during the occupation is not fraught with any danger. If during the year that has elapsed we have had no trouble to deplore, that does not mean that I must not be very wary about the future.

I am answerable for the tranquillity of the country and to uphold it I have at my disposal measures adapted to meet all emergencies. But I count especially on preventive measures. I wish to avoid new trials for the population, which might be caused by the passion or foolishness of a few. As matters stand, provocative sermons are having an evil influence, for they are awakening among

their hearers consequences outside the churches, especially in times of military and political stress, as was the case about the time of last Michaelmas. This opinion, which I have held from the beginning of my entry into office, is shared by a number of witnesses to whom your Eminence can hardly take exception. The excerpts from a Brussels newspaper, the "Vingtieme Siecle," which I inclose with my letter show clearly that even prudent addresses by preachers can be understood by the faithful as incitements to effective revolt. Such manifestoes, were they tolerated, would by the very nature of things end by creating little by little a permanent danger.

From another point of view, also, these sermons which I cannot tolerate exercise a more inciting influence than your Eminence appears to think.

The people believe that these verbal excesses issuing from the eminence of the pulpit have the sanction of ecclesiastical authority behind them.

Thus Catholics who have in my offices expressed their disapproval of the theme of several sermons have said explicitly that they did not expect that, after your Eminence's pastoral letter, there would be any intervention on the part of ecclesiastical authorities.

In the report quoted from the "Vingtieme Siecle" the same thought comes to the surface. The pastoral letter of last Christmas appears to embody a program and to act as an encouragement to the faint-hearted. I venture to think that this straightforward language has cleared up the situation, and I have a right to hope that the country which I have administered since the time of the war and on which I have not ceased to bestow my utmost care will enjoy tranquillity for its own greater advantage.

Accept, your Eminence, the wishes of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) BARON VON BISSING,
Lieutenant General.

The following extracts of a correspondence from Brussels in the "Vingtieme Siecle" of December 2d, 1915, were inclosed with the preceding letter:

How the Belgian people gave expression to their religious feelings.

IMPRESSIVE DEMONSTRATIONS IN THE CHURCHES

For the house of God is the only place where one is still allowed to publicly proclaim the ardor of one's feelings as a citizen, where the national colors float freely, exposed to every eye, where resound, sustained by the peals of the organ, the hymns dear to our patriotic hearts, where from the pulpit words—noble and manly—are heard, by which our energies are fed and nourished.

The Belgian clergy, regular and secular, is equal to its task in these days of public mourning. *The example given to them by the head of the episcopate and the program he has drawn up for them in the famous pastoral letter have stimulated the zeal of the most faint-hearted.*

THE PATRIOTIC APOSTOLATE OF PREACHERS

. . . There are times . . . when the public, spellbound and electrified by the proud words emanating from the pulpit, feels an irresistible desire to give full vent to the surging emotions by which they are agitated. *They forget the majesty of the place* and abandon themselves to the joy of breaking forth into raptures of delight.

On the evening of All Souls' Day in a Brussels church, where hundreds of spectators were squatting even on the steps of the altar, the advertised preacher, who wore the gown of the disciples of St. Dominic, gave out to his audience, with a bluntness excusable under the circumstances, that they must restrain themselves from any demonstration out of place in such a spot. . . . The orator had taken as a theme for his sermon, "Patriotism." He spoke of the war, the country, its glories past, present and future, with an enthusiasm and an earnestness calculated to send a thrill through every one. His language was quivering, clear and inflamed. One felt that he was inspired with an ardent

NOTE—The passages printed in italic type were underlined by von Bissing.

conviction which he was desirous of sharing with others. His eloquence set forth in bold relief the heroic deeds he called to mind, as well as memories from the past, put together in such a way as to make a picture which epitomized these events in a striking manner. Moreover, his language was so bold that his audience, panting for breath, was really intoxicated by hearing him express with a freedom scornful of possible reprisals, ideas and sentiments which harmonized so well with theirs.

Such harangues have a salutary effect on the crowd. We are comforted, braced up, electrified. If after that the national anthem, "Vers l'Avenir," resounds stentoriously through the vaulting, sung with full voices, then immediately patriotism raises its head, our lips quiver. . . . It is at times like these that we do realize how dear our country is to us, and what sacrifices we are prepared to make to save her.

The Cardinal, looking upon the discussion as closed, left von Bissing's last letter unanswered; nevertheless in the appeal which he addressed to him before going to Rome in favor of political prisoners, he corrected the erroneous interpretation which the Governor General had made of certain passages in the article in the "Vingtieme Siecle."

CHAPTER XX

GUARDING OF THE TELEPHONE LINE AT VILVORDE

An accident had happened in the district of Vilvorde to the telephone wires. What was the cause nobody knew. No matter, the town was made responsible and by way of punishment the magnates of Vilvorde were ordered by the German Commandant to secure the guarding of the line. Several priests and religious having been summoned to act as sentries, the Cardinal sent von Bissing a letter of protest:

Archbishop's House, Malines,
December 18th, 1915.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—The Kreischef has passed the order to the commercial authorities of Vilvorde to have the telephone lines guarded by the magnates of the commune.

In his proclamation of December 11th, 1915, the imperial representative himself says explicitly: "It is doubtful whether the line broke down." The immediate consequence is that no "misdeed" has been proved, and that therefore there is no case for repression.

Nevertheless the claim is made to impose on the parochial clergy of Vilvorde, on the director and professors, on the priests of the College of Notre Dame, on the Christian brothers, the guarding for twelve consecutive hours of a telephone line.

The clergy has declared their inability to take up this task and I have approved their decision.

I feel sure, sir, that it will be enough to draw your kind attention to this incident to have an end put to this persecution and in anticipation I express my gratitude to your Ex-

cellency, and at the same time beg you to accept the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

The Governor General replied, throwing the responsibility of summoning priests and clerics on the communal authorities:

Government General of Belgium, Brussels,
December 22d, 1915.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

I have the honor to inform your Eminence in reply to your letter of the 18th inst. that the appointment of priests for guarding the telephone line of Vilvorde is not due to my administration but to the Belgian communal authorities. I share your Eminence's view entirely that priests should not be constrained for this service. I have given orders to my subordinates to see to it that for the future the Belgian communal authorities do not commit such excesses in exercising their power.

I offer to your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem and have the honor to be your devoted servant,

(Signed) BARON VON BISSING,
Lieutenant General.

The truth of the matter is this:

A vicar of the town, the superior of the Christian brothers, and several reverend professors of the college had been summoned by the communal authorities for sentry duty during the night. At this news the Dean Van Reeth went at once to the town hall. In the absence of the burgomaster he was received by an official, who told him that the orders had been given by the Germans. With a view of finding out for himself the exact meaning of these orders, the dean went to see the Commandant; the latter declared that he had indeed given orders that the telephone wires should be guarded by the magnates of the town, but that he had not specified any particular class of persons.

The dean hastened to write to the burgomaster the following letter:

Sir—I forbid all priests and religious of my district to act as sentries to guard the telephone line, and I assume myself the responsibility for this refusal . . .

In spite of the entreaties addressed to him, the dean refused to withdraw his prohibition. The communal authorities summoned civilians to take the place of the recalcitrant priests and the incident was closed.

CHAPTER XXI

BEFORE LEAVING FOR ROME THE CARDINAL AGAIN RECOMMENDS TO VON BISSING THE MORAL AND RELIGIOUS INTERESTS OF THE POLITICAL PRISONERS

Archbishop's House, Malines,
January 11th, 1916.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—At the time of leaving Belgium,* for a few days, I take the liberty of calling your attention once again to the religious and moral interests which are suffering a severe check in the prisons and rooms of the Kommandantur.

Nearly all those detained, and their number has always been increasing, are put into solitary confinement from the time of their arrest and remain there till their trial. The German authorities have made it a rule to forbid prisoners in solitary confinement to assist at religious services. The upshot of this is that these victims of the great misfortune which Belgium is undergoing, though they have for the most part done nothing with which their conscience reproaches them, are, in fact, robbed of all comfort for their souls and exposed to the dangers of moral depression.

This kind of life, sir, is unbearable, and I shall deem it my duty to notify it to my Supreme Chief, the Sovereign Pontiff.

The German authorities have no valid grounds for upholding such a regime.

In fact, the arrangements of the prison are such that each prisoner is in a different pew, whence he can neither see his neighbor nor communicate with him. The war-

* NOTE—The Cardinal left Belgium for Rome on January 12 and returned February 27.

den, stationed at the center of the semicircle, can see all the pews.

Besides this, the priest who says the mass and who preaches is a German. Your Excellency will call to mind that, having in view the keen patriotic feelings of the prisoners, I had asked that a Belgian priest might administer to the wants of religion, in regard to Belgian prisoners, under the guardianship of the German administration, and that this request has been shelved. The German chaplain alone therefore is able to influence the prisoners by word or deed. For the last time, I beg your Excellency to have pity on so many souls; there are more than 400 prisoners at this moment untried at Brussels, suffering from the stunting of their moral and religious instincts.

I beg of you more earnestly than ever no longer to refuse prisoners and condemned men facilities for confessing to a priest, to whom it is humanly possible to open their minds with full confidence. They have gone so far as to refuse a Belgian priest to men sentenced to death. Your Excellency, who has a pious soul, will understand that these facts rouse the indignation of a believing people and are for us pastors a real torture. Surely at the moment of death has not the condemned man wishes and desires to express which can only be told to one in whom he has full confidence?

I have left unanswered till now the letter No. 10637 which your Excellency addressed me dated December 15, 1915, because I had looked upon this letter as a conclusion to a correspondence, already long-drawn-out, about the ministry and preaching of our clergy.

But your Excellency has inclosed with this letter an extract from the "Vingtieme Siecle," which might give room for a misunderstanding. Your Excellency underlines in a correspondence alleged to have been sent from Brussels to Havre a passage where it is said: "The example which has been given to the Belgian clergy by the head of the episcopate and the program he has drawn up for them in his famous pastoral letter, have fired the zeal of the most faint-hearted." I conjecture that the intention of your Excel-

lency in calling my attention to these two lines is to insinuate that if unguarded words be spoken in church the author of the pastoral letter of November, 1914, would be responsible.

In the early days of January, 1915, I had the honor of writing to your Excellency that my letter would keep up the courage of our people and would prevent the seditious uproar which the German authorities, in their alarm, expected. Sure as I was of my ground, I refused to withdraw my letter and gave orders to the clergy to read it. A whole year's experience must have proved to the most pessimistic minds that my forecasts were correct and that therefore we ought to be of one mind in wishing to harmonize the regulations and disciplinary measures of the occupying power with the respect due to the patriotism and the national dignity of the Belgian people. In substance, this is what the article in the "Vingtieme Siecle" means and in that sense I can only agree with it.

Kindly accept, sir, the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

CHAPTER XXII

RENEWED COMPLAINTS OF BARON VON BISSING CONCERNING THE PREACHING OF THE CLERGY

Government General of Belgium, Brussels,
P. A. I. 2031. *February 29th,* 1916.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

I write to inform your Eminence that on the 13th of February inst. the Vicar Wittemberg, in the course of a sermon preached in the Church of St. Alice, expressed himself as follows: "The German people is a lying people. Till now the Pope has only heard the German version, now he hears the Belgian version. The Cardinal of Malines was received by the Pope at the same time as another Belgian priest; he will be back in a few days with very good news for the Belgians. The Germans will be made responsible for all that has taken place in Belgium; the Belgians will get a slice of Germany."

The Vicar Wittemberg has already given cause for complaint. Your Eminence, in your letter of December 3rd, 1915, had answered that you had not been able to carry through the investigation you had begun in his regard.

I now beg your Eminence to tell me how you will call this priest to account for his misbehavior, and what steps you are thinking of taking to prevent preachers in the future from making in the pulpit statements which, first, are slanders of the German nation and therefore of the army of occupation; second, are of a nature to disturb and rouse the Belgian people to revolt, and, third, are quite foreign to the preacher's office.

Accept, your Eminence, the wishes of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) BARON VON BISSING,
Lieutenant General.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
March 6, 1916.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—Having returned a few days ago to Belgium, I deem it a duty to thank your Excellency with all sincerity for the facilities you granted me for accomplishing my journey to Rome. I could only congratulate myself, both in going and coming back, on the courteous attentions which were shown me throughout my journey and at the frontier.

Your Excellency's dispatch No. 2031, February 29, reminds me that on the date, December 3rd, I said I had not been able to carry through an investigation which had then been requested of me about the sermons of the Rev. Wittemberg, vicar of St. Alice. As a matter of fact I did not know up to now and I still do not know what are the exact grievances about which I ought to institute an investigation. But this time your Excellency calls my attention to a sermon preached by the same Mr. Wittemberg on February 13th, and you give details of the theme for which the preacher is held blameworthy. I forthwith summoned the vicar to the archbishop's house and this is in substance the explanation he has given me: "The gist of my sermon," said he, "was to comment on the parable of the grain of mustard seed and the leaven. I expatiated on the wondrous growth of the church from its very beginning and the transformation effected in the world by the preaching of the gospel. In my peroration, I spoke of the prestige of the papacy at the present time. All eyes are turned on Benedict XV. All nations vie with one another for his sympathy. Till now Belgium had had no opportunity to make the voice of her bishops heard, but our archbishop and another member of the Belgian hierarchy are in Rome. We must all have confidence in them. It is, of course, difficult for the Holy Father to see the truth in the midst of different and often opposite versions, which come to him from every side. But let us be of good hope; already there is a rumor afloat that his Holiness has told the bishop of Namur that if he were one day invited to the peace negotiations, he would

put down as a first condition the liberation of Belgium."

The vicar protests that he has not accused the German nation of lying and that he has said nothing to suggest the idea of territorial conquest.

There have probably been two misunderstandings. The first passage gave rise to the first, and the second passage to the second.

The vicar offered to give me, if I wanted, the notes which he made use of in preaching. I deemed it superfluous to ask him for them, but if your Excellency desires supplementary explanations, I shall think it my duty to accept the offer which has been made to me.

Accept, dear Governor General, the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

Government General of Belgium, Brussels,
P. A. J. 2339. *March* 9, 1915.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

As a sequel to my letter P. A. I. 2031, of February 29, I bring this to your Eminence's notice that the Vicar Wittemberg, of the Church of St. Alice, in Brussels, has been guilty of a new misdemeanor by making in his sermon of February 27th statements of a political nature. Consequently I beg your Eminence to let me know at once whether I may rest quite assured that the Vicar Wittemberg will be compelled by ecclesiastical authority to confine himself within the limits of his ministerial office.

I offer to your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) Baron von Bissing,
Lieutenant General.

This letter remained for the time being unanswered.

The controversy about patriotic acts was not, however, ended. It will again be the subject of long discussions between the Cardinal, the Governor General and the head of his political department, Baron von der Lancken.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE PASTORAL LETTER, "ON MY RETURN FROM ROME"

On October 15th, 1915, the Cardinal had written a pastoral entitled, "For the Feast of All Saints and All Souls' Day." It had been read in all the churches in three sections on Sunday, October 31st, on All Saints' Day and on Sunday, November 6th. In answer to the dispatch of four copies the Governor General sent the following acknowledgment to his Eminence:

Brussels, November 11, 1915.

I have the honor to thank your Eminence for sending me four copies of your pastoral of October 15th. Although I do not share your views on all points, yet I note with pleasure that this new manifesto of your Eminence is a great improvement on those which have preceded it.

(Signed) Baron von Bissing.

As you see, von Bissing, pleased with the letter, did not even blame the Cardinal for having it printed without submitting it to the censor. Did he perchance hope that he had tamed his patriotism and had succeeded in making him change his attitude toward the power in occupation? If so, his illusion must have been short-lived; for the dispute was about to be reopened as closely contested as ever, about a new pastoral dated March 7th, 1916, and beginning, "On my return from Rome."

During the whole of his journey through Switzerland and Italy, the Cardinal had received enthusiastic ovations, which were meant both for the courageous pastor and the heroic country he represented. The German press had taken umbrage at these manifestations of warm sympathy;

it had accused the Cardinal of having lent himself to political demonstrations and it had urged the power of occupation to proceed against him with severity immediately on his return.

Undaunted by threats, the Cardinal communicated to his flock the comforting impressions he had gleaned during his journey.

On Sunday, March 12, the clergy read in all the churches of the diocese the letter, "On Our Return from Rome." The Cardinal, after expressing the joy he felt at finding himself again in the midst of the faithful of his diocese, said that his journey had been blessed in a special manner and that he came back happy, most happy. He had been received with fatherly kindness by the Pope, who told him that the cause of Belgium was his cause; he had satisfied himself that everywhere the moral triumph of Belgium had been definitely won, and lastly the assurances, which several disinterested and attentive observers of the general situation had given him, had fixed in his heart, more deep-rooted than ever, this conviction of final victory.

"Keep an absolute faith in Providence," he added; "are we not all of us always in the hands of the Almighty, more so, indeed, than the lilies of the fields or the birds of the air which flutter about the trees? . . . Make your plans, set up your batteries, order your movements, it remains for man to propose and God to dispose. . . . Imagine a belligerent nation sure of its army corps, its ammunitions, its command, on the point of gaining a triumph; should God allow the germs of an epidemic to break out in their ranks, there and then are ruined the expectations of the most optimistic.

"Therefore, above all, have confidence in God . . ."

The letter ended with an earnest appeal for prayer and sacrifice.

The Governor General was not long in showing his anger. The very next morning, before even writing to his Eminence, he put M. Charles Dessain, Burgomaster of Malines and printer to the archbishop, under arrest, as well as four printers engaged at his works. The Cardinal, hav-

ing learned the news at the Abbey of Mont-Cesar, where he had retired to make a retreat, hastened to address the following letter to von Bissing:

Abbaye du Mont-Cesar, Louvain,
March 15, 1916.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—The news has reached me here that M. Charles Dessain, Burgomaster of the town of Malines, and four workmen printers of his works, have been placed under arrest, the former for having had printed, the latter for printing, my pastoral dated March 7.

I presume that the intention of those who have arrested them is merely to have them examined.

But if your Excellency is of opinion that the arrest is the forerunner of a trial, perhaps of a condemnation, I would earnestly beg of you to consider that justice demands that the consequences of an act must be made to fall upon him who bears the responsibility. The printing of the pastoral is my act, rather than that of the printer and his workmen.

If objection were made to your Excellency, or your Excellency yourself were to make it, that you are not qualified to judge and proceed against a bishop and a prince of the Church exercising his pastoral office, I would take the liberty to call to your notice that in the present instance it is neither a bishop nor a member of the Sacred College against whom you would proceed, but a private individual, who, of his own accord, undertakes to be the spokesman of upright and faithful fathers of families, whom, through his loyalty and affection for them, he of his own responsibility takes under his shelter.

Accept, dear Governor General, the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

Von Bissing refused to comply with the demands of the Cardinal.

Government General of Belgium, Brussels,
March 18, 1916.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

I beg to inform your Eminence, in reply to your letter of the 15th inst., that it is solely on the ground of my decree on the censorship of printed matters that the Printer Dessain and his workmen have been prosecuted. Your Eminence may feel yourself morally responsible for the misdemeanor committed, which thus exposes fathers of families to prosecution at law; but that can have no influence on the legal procedure now going on. The result of this procedure is beyond my province.

Moreover, I cannot at all understand how your Eminence imagines that I can act toward you, as I would toward a private individual, without any regard for your ecclesiastical dignity.

I offer your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) BARON VON BISSING,
Lieutenant General.

M. Charles Dessain, Burgomaster of Malines, was condemned and deported to Germany on the charge of printing the pastoral.

Three days after the reading of the letter in the churches, von Bissing addressed to the Cardinal a long list of charges, which he took care to have published in the Belgian censored press.

Governor General of Belgium, Brussels,
P. A. I. 2606. *March* 15, 1916.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

I bring the following facts to your Eminence's notice.

He who is placed in the highest position to watch over

and safeguard the interests of the Catholic Church has assured me on several occasions and in the most formal manner that at your return from Rome your Eminence would observe an attitude full of moderation. I could expect then that your Eminence would abstain from manifestoes which continue to upset the easily excited minds of the Belgian people. For this reason I refrained from discussing with your Eminence the incidents connected with your journey and more particularly the collective letter of the Belgian bishops * and the political misuse which your Eminence made of the passport obtained by the Holy Father to allow you to go to Rome for purposes entirely ecclesiastical.

By your new pastoral your Eminence not only has not behaved conformably to the assurances given me by him who was best qualified to do so, but you have acted in such wise that relations between yourself and the power of occupation are again strained. Of course there can be no possible doubt whatever that I will never hinder your Eminence from transmitting to the faithful communications which the Holy See may wish to make to them through you. But your Eminence in your pastoral does not stop here. You give vent to remarks which are purely political. I protest vigorously against this way of acting.

The behavior of your Eminence is inexcusable, when in talking of the result of the war you raise hopes which are ill-grounded and obviously out of keeping with real facts. For instance, your Eminence, to strengthen your assertions, quotes vague statements coming from people who are quite outsiders in regard to events and whom it is impossible to look upon as good authorities. In another place, you try to make an impression by saying that the issue you desire might come about through the spreading of epidemic diseases.

* NOTE—On November 24, 1915, the Belgian hierarchy addressed a collective letter to the episcopate of Germany and Austro-Hungary to protest against the calumnies launched against the Belgians by the German Government and to call for an impartial inquiry about the atrocities committed by German troops at the beginning of the war. This letter remained unanswered.

By this arbitrary method of arguing, your Eminence can only provoke a mischievous excitement among an overcredulous people, which may drive it into an active or passive resistance to the occupying power.

I have to mark as particularly intolerable the allusion which your Eminence makes in your pastoral to an encroachment on the religious liberties of the people in the occupied territory. Your Eminence knows better than any one that this insinuation is perfectly unjustified.

Under these circumstances, contrary to the spirit of forbearance which I have shown till now, I am determined to suppress without delay every kind of political propaganda spread under the cloak of liberty of worship and every act tending to foster sentiments of hostility toward the legitimate authority of the power in occupation, an authority recognized by international law. It is my duty to do so in conformity with my decrees and the fulfillment of my mission.

If, till now, I have notified to your Eminence the transgressions of which your priests have been guilty in order that they might be punished according to ecclesiastical discipline, I am determined to dispense with this in the future. In fact, your Eminence yourself has set the example of insubordination. As a consequence of this, your influence is now without weight. I must, moreover, more and more, make your Eminence morally responsible for the regrettable acts into which a great number of priests allow themselves to be drawn and which bring severe penalties upon some of them.

Your Eminence will again retort that I have misunderstood certain passages of your pastoral and I have given them a sense never meant by you. All discussion about this must prove futile, and I have no intention to start a fresh one. On the contrary, I have firmly made up my mind for the future not to allow your Eminence, misusing your high position and the respect due to your cloth, to indulge in a political propaganda calculated to turn the heads of the mob, a delinquency which in the case of a simple citizen would result in penal consequences. I warn

your Eminence, therefore, to abstain henceforth from any political kind of activity.

I offer to your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) BARON VON BISSING,
Lieutenant General.

The Cardinal merely acknowledged von Bissing's letter, intending to answer it later in detail. A month afterward he told the Governor General that he had drawn up a document of justification. He offered to send it to him, with a request to communicate the same to the bishops of Germany and Austria-Hungary.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
April 26, 1916.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—When on the 20th of last March I acknowledged your letter of March 15, I told you that journeys necessitated by my pastoral duties prevented me from replying at once.

Since then I have prepared an answer.

In this document I deal with each of the grievances which your Excellency has drawn up and suddenly and publicly launched at me and at my pastoral office.

The sending of the joint letter of the Belgian hierarchy to the German episcopate is the first grievance; it is, however, merely mentioned.

According to your second complaint, I am supposed to have misused the passport which I obtained through your Excellency's kindness for my journey to Rome.

The third grievance, the chief one, is that in my pastoral of March 7 I have indulged in remarks of a purely political character.

In proof of this third complaint, your accusation of March 15 bases itself on three different facts.

"I have tried," you say, "in talking about the issue of the war, to raise hopes which were ill-grounded and out of

keeping with real facts"; to bolster up these hopes, "I have quoted vague statements emanating from irresponsible persons"; lastly I said that "the decision I hope for might be brought about by the spreading of epidemic diseases."

Against each of these accusations I set down the facts as they really are.

Then as the allegation talks very often about "politics" without defining this abstract word, I have thought that to clear the air of equivocations or to forestall them, it would be necessary to define the dispositions of canon law and constitutional law about the liberty of preaching.

Lastly, your Excellency has shown that you especially took to heart an allusion which I made about an encroachment on the religious liberty of the people dwelling in occupied territory. I have made it my duty to declare that I am ready to lay bare in detail my grievances under this head. Only I ask as a proviso that guarantees of immunity from punishment be granted me for the persons whose names and testimony I may have to quote.

My reply to the address on each of these points is therefore drawn up. It is at your Excellency's disposal. I am sincerely desirous of sending it to you.

But I cannot make up my mind to send it to you spontaneously. In fact, I ask myself what useful purpose would be served were I to do so.

Would it be to convince your Excellency?

Why, you have warned me that all my explanations would be shelved; you have made up your mind that all discussion should be useless.

Would it be to enlighten the Belgian people?

In the first place I could not do so without exposing my printer to the risk of a year's imprisonment.

Moreover, I have confidence in my countrymen, just as they have confidence in their archbishop and bishops.

Your Excellency thinks the Belgians credulous; how mistaken you are! Our little Belgian people is wonderful for its coolness and common sense.

Accustomed to think for themselves, they place no reliance on opinions which people try to impose on them with-

out discussion. For twenty months they have not been spared either alarming news, grief of separations, anxiety for the morrow, or intimidating procedures; yet is not your Excellency struck by the unshakable confidence which they hold in the future?

Would it be to justify myself that I ought to send my answer to your Excellency?

But my conscience does not reproach me for anything in which I have gone beyond the boundary marked out for me by my episcopal prerogative. Moreover, in the carrying out of my pastoral office, I depend on the jurisdiction of the Holy See, and my last pastoral tells clearly enough what reception the sovereign pontiff was pleased to grant me.

Nevertheless, I should like, sir, to be able to send you my pamphlet, because there is a fraction of the public to whose esteem and affection I am attached and with which you alone can put me in touch; I mean my brethren, the faithful, the clergy and the Catholic bishops of Germany and Austria-Hungary.

If one may judge by the language of the press, Catholic and non-Catholic, of these two countries our brethren must know and judge very ill of us. They know not what we are. In every case, where we have been put on our trial since the war began, they have only heard witnesses for the prosecution. You have published broadcast among them your own accusations. They know nothing of the point of my offense, my pastoral.

Could I only hope that as a loyal soldier and just judge you would consent to put before them my pastoral, your allegation and my justifying rejoinder, with what joy would I not send you, by return of post, this last document dealing with my case?

Not only would I congratulate myself on knowing my honor was safeguarded, but I would above all see in this communication to my brethren, whom I believe to be in good faith, yet in error, a means of paving the way for the time when peace is proclaimed, for preparing a reconciliation, in Catholic charity, of souls which suffer in feeling that they are so violently estranged from one another.

Accept, dear Governor General, the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

The Governor General von Bissing met the Cardinal's desire with a curt refusal.

Government General of Belgium, Brussels,
P. A. I. No. 4063. *April* 20, 1916.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

In your esteemed letter of the 26th inst., your Eminence asks whether I am inclined to accept and hand over to the German bishops a detailed document to justify your behavior. The reasons which, after ripe consideration, have determined me to say in my letter of March 15th that I could not allow new discussions about this matter still hold good. I regret that I cannot accede to your Eminence's wish. I am all the more inclined to hold fast to my opinion because from the hints which your Eminence gives about the contents of your document of justification I believe that further discussion would be useless.

The public and particularly the German bishops have been able to form their own judgment from the writings which have reached them. The last pastoral of your Eminence was published in extenso in the press. If discussion on this matter were reopened, only trouble could come from it, most especially among the Belgian people. It is precisely because I recognize that the great majority of the Belgian people behave correctly that I wish to avoid everything which might provoke a fresh agitation. Basing my judgment on the same grounds, I venture to think the best justification for your Eminence is to let bygones be bygones and to take account of circumstances and needs arising from our occupation of the country.

I offer to your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem.

The Governor General.

(Signed) Baron von Bissing,
Lieutenant General.

The following is the justification which von Bissing refused to accept:

Archbishop's House, Malines,
April 24, 1916.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—A full month has elapsed since your Excellency thought fit to appeal to public opinion to bear witness that your behavior toward the Belgian people and myself has been beyond reproach, whereas mine has been blameworthy and seditious.

The procedure is assuredly a strange one. Nevertheless, I would not complain of it, if it had pleased your Excellency to join to your accusation the text of the pastoral which you indicted.

But, on the contrary, I have been accused and judged without a hearing. I have been condemned by a verdict which, it is declared, is irrevocable.

I have been made a defenseless butt for the comments of hate, the slanders and the ribaldry of the German press. Your government has forced the Belgian press to publish your accusations. It has allowed the free circulation of cartoons which insulted me,* and had I, in self-defense, published two lines of protest, my printer would have paid the service rendered me with one year's imprisonment.

In the letter which I had the honor to write to your Excellency under date March 20, I gave hopes of an early answer, which I intended to make to your letter No. 2606, dated March 15. But I preferred to put off my reply for two reasons.

In the first place, time soothes one's mind and allows one to reflect.

Secondly, it is well that your Excellency should have a fresh proof that you were mistaken when you believe the Belgians to be excitable and always threatening to disturb public order. Belgian patriotism is unconquerable and

* NOTE—One of these cartoons depicted the Cardinal under the shape of a parrot on its perch. Von Bissing standing up on his side with uplifted finger was telling him to hold his tongue.

proud, but it is, and remains, dignified; it does not yield, but it retains its self-possession.

Already for twenty months, notwithstanding the dark memories which float about our atmosphere, in spite of annoyances, regulations without stint, requisitions and searches, condemnations to fine, imprisonment, deportation, death, which fall thick upon us like hail itself, this fair little people of Belgium keeps within bounds. It neither bows its head nor does it cast down its eyes before any one, and it has not committed a single revolutionary act.

Its only crime is that it will not die. The only crime ascribable to us—public administration, magistrates, clergy, hierarchy—is that we persist in thinking and saying: "Belgian people in the indissoluble union of your two races—Walloon and Flemish—you shall not die, you cannot die."

I have carefully read your accusation of March 15. I think I can sum up in a few words the charges against me which it contains.

Your Excellency says you were deceived at the time of my coming back from Rome. You expected from me, you say, an attitude full of moderation.

Incidentally, the letter of March 15 mentions the collective letter of the Belgian hierarchy to the German bishops.

Then it finds fault with me for my having misused the passport which allowed me to carry out my journey to Rome.

Lastly and above all, you find fault with me for having indulged in my last pastoral in "remarks of a purely political nature."

Your Excellency expected then from me, as you say, "an attitude of moderation" at the time of my return to Belgium.

You wish, no doubt, to give me thus to understand that on your side you intended to act toward me with peculiar kindness.

To tell the truth, I have not been aware of it. When on Tuesday, February 29, at 6 a. m. I was entering Brussels I went at once to St. Louis's Institute. I there said

mass and peacefully spent some hours of the morning. Meanwhile five spies kept watch on the institute, and when I proceeded to return to my cathedral at Malines at 11, two policemen in plain clothes, placing themselves at my side, escorted me to within a few yards of my archiepiscopal palace. Indeed, they were so very pressing in their attentions that they could have overheard a private conversation had I not warned my friend to lower his voice.

And your Excellency will not have forgotten that on March 6, a few days after my return and therefore before the publication of my pastoral, which was not read in the churches until the 12th of that month, the newspapers in the service of the German Government announced to the country nine fresh condemnations to death, six of which were followed by instant executions at Mons, for acts which were branded as political crimes. These condemned men were denied the consolation of making their last confession and final confidences to a Belgian priest.

Your Excellency knew of the collective letter of the Belgian episcopate to the bishops of Germany at the moment when you were kind enough to grant me a passport for Rome. Besides, I have still to learn that a brotherly exchange of letters between members of the Catholic episcopacy falls under the provisions of the penal code, or is forbidden by international law. On the other hand, it harmonizes entirely with the spirit and traditions of the Church.

I am well aware that toward the end of my stay in Rome the German press exerted itself to bring about the withdrawal of my passport and tried to turn to my disadvantage the collective letter of the Belgian episcopate to the bishops of Germany and my interview with M. Briand.

But the collective letter which had not hindered my departure from Belgium could not consistently hinder my return. As to my interview with M. Briand, no one had any inkling of what took place at it, and could not therefore be justified in claiming that it served political ends.

The truth is that during the whole of my journey I practiced a reserve to an extent such as many thought excessive.

I remember hearing a diplomat exclaim, "Can it be then that this poor Cardinal Mercier even during his stay here in Italy is still a prisoner of the Germans?" I granted no interview, delivered no speech, did not depart a single mile from my itinerary. I was too anxious to furnish no pretext for a fresh incident such as might be put forward as a plea to bar my return. I foresaw the danger and was forearmed.

The German press, nevertheless, has discovered, so it seems, a political discourse which I am believed to have delivered at Florence, "eine politische Rede in einer Nonnenschule." The fact is that I paid a visit to the Sisters of Providence at Badia di Ropoli, in the suburbs of Florence; they conduct a boarding school for young girls. When I entered the playroom, the "Brabanconne" was played, one of the girls read me an address which I answered with a sympathetic reference to our absent country, but without uttering a word that could wound any one. Nothing more. There, as elsewhere, I preserved the reserve which my dignity and my own interest demanded.

The third complaint in your allegation of March 15, the chief one and the one most enlarged upon, is also the most vague and intangible.

I am accused of "indulging in purely political criticisms," of "having given an example of insubordination," of "having pursued an unbridled political propaganda," but no care is taken to define the meaning of the abstract term "political."

The specimens they bring forward of such propaganda enable one nevertheless to conjecture the sense of the accusation.

It seems that I have acted politically when "in contemplating the result of the war I have sought to raise unfounded hopes contrary to the stern reality of facts"; when in order to find ground for these hopes "I have quoted inaccurate statements emanating from incompetent persons"; finally when I said that "the decision I looked for might be brought about by the spread of epidemic diseases."

But what evil is there, pray, in encouraging a suffering people? Should I better second the policy of the occupying

power if I drove the Belgians into a state of discouragement and despair?

Deep in my breast I confidently look for the success of our cause. This confidence is based on motives of the natural order, which in my pastoral I refrained from developing precisely to avoid the semblance of meddling with the calculations of politicians or the plans of headquarters. It is based besides on supernatural motives of which my conscience is the sole judge. I cherish this confidence. It sustains my courage, and because I love my faithful flock I desire to impart it to them.

Once again where is the evil? I do not claim to hinder you from indulging opposite hopes, and when I read the pastorals and discourses of German and Austrian cardinals and bishops it never occurred to me to impute as a crime to them their exhortations to patience and hope addressed to their flocks and your soldiers. Why is it that what is religion beyond the Rhine is on this side political meddling?

But, say they, you deceive your hearers; "you quote the inaccurate statements of incompetent persons."

Incompetent? Is this quite certain? Suppose I had quoted diplomats, statesmen, military authorities? Why then, indeed, I should be justly accused of speaking politics.

Besides, if the words quoted are inaccurate, why are you so disturbed? If I had quoted the evidence in detail, had brought forward the names of persons who had been mixed up with the events alluded to, I could understand your fears of an agitation. But what reason is there to fear consequences from an anonymous report, which for that reason is considered worthless?

According to the German newspapers my crime is especially this, that I called down on our enemies the chastisement of an epidemic. I said simply in general terms that human means are not enough to secure success, for man, however resourceful he may be or however great his efforts, remains dependent on Divine Omnipotence. Man proposes, I said, quoting a proverb known to every one and which in every-day languages embodies a thought inscribed on every page of Holy Writ—man proposes and God disposes.

No nation, whether friendly or unfriendly, was expressly aimed at in my pastoral, but the first to whom the logical context points the application of this scriptural saying and of the homely Christian proverb derived from it is the nation to which my words were directly addressed, the Belgian nation, her army and together with her the armies of the Allies.

Just before the phrase to which exception is taken I had written, "For us the future is not doubtful, but we must prepare for it, and to prepare for it we must foster within ourselves the virtue of patience and the spirit of sacrifice."

And immediately after the offending phrase I said, "Purify your consciences; let purity, modesty, Christian simplicity, reign in your homes; prepare yourselves by contrition, etc."

Between these two ideas they wish to insert a desire of vengeance, a prayer that a miraculous epidemic should fall on the enemy's army. Thus the logical connection of thought is broken, and to break it it was needful to do violence to the context and to truth.

"I must point out as particularly intolerable," your Excellency declares, "the allusion you make in your pastoral to an infringement of the religious liberty of the population in the occupied territory. Your Eminence knows better than any one how unjust this insinuation is."

I am quite willing to furnish the proof of my assertion; but with this stipulation, that I am given an understanding that no harsh proceedings shall be taken against the persons whose testimony I have to produce.

Meanwhile I notice in the allegations of March 15 an undoubted trespass on the liberty of my ministry. Your Excellency there reminds me that you have remitted to my tribunal for punishment, according to canonical discipline, certain ecclesiastics whose preaching had given umbrage to the occupying power. You add that for the future you will not act with like forbearance; the reason assigned for your change of attitude is the example of my own insubordination.

Your Excellency concludes that you have a duty to hold

me morally responsible for the acts of the clergy and for the severe chastisements which they draw down on themselves; and you claim for so doing "the legitimate authority recognized in you by the law of nations."

Now if there is one matter which canon law and the law of nations withdraw from the purview of the civil power, it is the exercise of preaching. One of the most inviolable features of religious liberty is the prerogative of the apostolic word. In the Church of Jesus Christ the right of preaching is so sacred that it belongs de jure only to the Pope and the bishops. Priests speak only in the name of their bishop and under his control. You are quite right in holding me responsible for the preaching of my clergy, but my responsibility is not to the civil power, but to the Church and the Sovereign Pontiff.

Religious authority belongs of right divine exclusively to the Pope and to the bishops in union with him. The Church has at all times resisted the claim of the civil power that all her acts of jurisdiction should be submitted to its approval.

It is evident then that, if even the lawfully established authority of a state had the right to subordinate to its good pleasure the promulgation of papal or episcopal acts, the supreme prerogative of church government would belong not to the Church, but to the secular power. Every legislator is the born interpreter of his own laws.

Your Excellency is quite willing, so you say, to authorize me to transmit to the faithful communications which the Holy Father would desire to make known to them through me. That is something, sir, but it is not enough. The bishop is not only the mouthpiece of papal instructions; he is himself a teacher by divine right.

I have the right to teach, to instruct, to guide my faithful people. I have that right, inasmuch as by the divine constitution of the Church I have that duty.

And in carrying out that duty I have no other responsibility except to my conscience and to my hierarchical chief, our Holy Father the Pope.

The law of nations codified in The Hague convention

does not weaken, but rather strengthens, the prerogative which I claim for the episcopate.

Under the rule of the Belgian constitution, the Church enjoys complete freedom. Article XIV of the constitution proclaims liberty of worship and its public exercise. Article XVI declares that the state has not the right to forbid to the ministers of any form of worship the publication of their acts.

Now The Hague convention (Article XLIII) imposes on the occupying power the obligation to respect the constitution and the laws of the country occupied.

When your Excellency brings before my tribunal priests whom you believe guilty of abuse in the exercise of their religious ministry, it is not merely an act of simple courtesy that you are performing, still less voluntary concession of a superior to an inferior. You are showing respect for a prerogative acknowledged to belong to the religious authority by canon law and also by the constitutional law of Belgium, which international law forbids you, as the occupying power, to violate.

And when the Feldgericht of the province of Antwerp condemned to deportation and imprisonment the noble and courageous Chevalier Charles Dessain, on the charge of having published my last pastoral letter, it violated at once canon law, and, through the violation of the Belgian constitution, international law.

As to these provisions of ecclesiastical law and of the Belgian constitution, one can understand that a foreign military court may not have fully grasped them, but it would not be easy to understand how the immediate representative of the imperial power, whose foresight and sincerity may not be called in question, should consent to allow them for a long time to be set aside.

Each time that my attention has been called to an outburst into which an ecclesiastic may have been betrayed while preaching, I have at once held an inquiry and have informed your Excellency of the result and in no single case has your Excellency persisted in the charge. It does not then appear that you have any reason to depart from your

present method of procedure. In agreement with your Excellency's views I hold myself responsible for the preaching and the attitude of my clergy; but it is needful that I should be informed of blameworthy acts laid to their charge, if my responsibility is to be effective.

I am still anxious to believe that the words "severe chastisement" that slipped from your Excellency's pen do not convey your fixed and final purpose. You will have the goodness to leave nothing undone to spare our priests, whose self-respect you may have admired, penalties which they do not deserve. You would not wish to deprive me of their assistance at a moment when more than ever it is necessary.

It would be just, sir, that the public which has learned of your complaint against the archbishop of Malines should also be informed of his reply.

Taking your stand on considerations which in your mind justified your conduct, you have not hesitated to inflict on me what you must regard as a stigma. Your letter ends with this stern conclusion: "You have misused your high functions and the respect due to your cloth, pursued an unbridled political propaganda, which would entail upon any ordinary citizen penal responsibilities."

It would be difficult for any one to find words of a more infamous character than those you have used in my regard. My conscience protests against this language and hurls back the stigma. This document contains my justification.

Trusting the chivalrous feelings of him whom I am addressing, trusting to the spirit of justice of him who has constituted himself my judge, I respectfully beg him to make known my defense to those before whom he has flaunted his accusations against me.

Receive, I pray, Mr. Governor General, the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

CHAPTER XXIV

PATRIOTIC ACTION OF THE PRIESTS

In consequence of the polemic raised by the Cardinal's journey and the publication of his letter, "On My Return from Rome," the occupying power redoubled the rigor of its measures affecting the clergy. In close succession several priests and clerics were arrested. The fury of the German police was let loose especially against the great educational establishments at Brussels. On March 19 a search, accompanied by a good deal of uproar, was made at the College of St. Michael.

At half-past five in the morning a hundred policemen and soldiers made a raid on the establishment. In spite of the most minute search, lasting till midday, they only succeeded in discovering and carrying off as booty some copies of the newspaper "Libre Belgique." Nevertheless Frere Devroye, rector of the college, who had just come out of prison, was again arrested.

On April 14 it was the turn of St. Louis's Institute to receive a visit from the German police. They were looking for a student of philosophy, whom they succeeded in finding. That evening Canon Cocheteux, the director of the institute, and the Abbe Truyens were taken to the Kommandantur.

The Governor General, in order to show plainly that in pursuing the clergy he had chiefly the Cardinal in view, inserted an official notice in the German press and the censored press of Belgium, that arrests had been made in an ecclesiastical establishment where the Cardinal had apartments and where he stayed whenever he came to Brussels.

On May 22 the military prosecutor asked for Canon Cocheteux a sentence of a year and three months' imprison-

ment for having advised pupils of his establishment to join the Belgian army, and that the Abbe Truyens should be sentenced to ten years' penal servitude for having given the lads the necessary instructions for crossing the frontier.

His Eminence wrote to Baron von der Lancken pointing out the serious consequences that would result to scholastic institutions from the arrest of their directors and professors. There followed between the Cardinal and the chief of the political department a correspondence relative to the attitude of the occupying power toward the clergy.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
May 23, 1916.

To Baron von der Lancken, Chief of the Political Department, Governor General, Brussels.

My dear Baron: As a result of the confidential conversation that his Excellency the Nuncio of Brussels has had the honor to have with you and of which he was good enough to inform me, I have personally supported Madame Wibin's * request to his Excellency the Governor General, Baron von Bissing. I am confident that this request will be favorably received and I thank you beforehand for the kindness with which you have promised to support it.

But I beg for more than this. I ask for your support on behalf of other matters affecting public order and which deeply concern me. Numerous priests engaged in teaching, notably the rector and prefect of studies of St. Michael's College, the director and several professors of St. Louis's Institute at Brussels, are already in prison or threatened with imprisonment. You are aware that our teaching staff is already greatly reduced, as several of our professors are in the army engaged as ambulance-bearers or chaplains. If the military authorities continue to persecute our clergy, we shall be compelled to face the painful contingency of having to close our ecclesiastical colleges.

I particularly call your attention and the clemency of the Governor General to this situation at the moment when

* NOTE—Madame Wibin was asking for a passport to Switzerland.

the military prosecutor is asking for years of imprisonment against the director and teachers of St. Louis's Institute.

Receive, Baron, the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

The Chief of the Political Department of the Government General of Belgium.

Brussels, May 31st, 1916.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

In answer to your Eminence's esteemed letter of the 23rd inst., I have the honor to inform you that I have given my support to Madame Wibin's request to the Governor General and also that this will be granted.

The incidents that took place at St. Louis's Institute are seized by your Eminence as an occasion for reopening the question of putting the clergy under arrest. If your Eminence will allow me to speak frankly, a fresh exchange of views is in no way unacceptable to me. In fact, ever since the beginning of the occupation this question has interested the German, quite as keenly as it has the ecclesiastical, authorities. It appears to me, nevertheless, that up to the present your Eminence has not grasped quite accurately the point of view from which the occupying power regards the matter. Even in your last letter you make use of the expression, "persecution of the clergy."

In no case can it be a question of persecution. When clergymen are condemned this is in virtue of the enforcement of laws and decrees before which everybody stands on an equality. The military courts take cognizance of wrongdoing, no matter who the culprit may be. It would be a flagrant injustice for us to accord special privileges to the clergy. To grant them after conviction, systematically, so to say, the remission of their punishment would be to ride straight toward the overthrow of justice.

Naturally your Eminence draws attention to the injury caused to ecclesiastical education, and you find therein an adequate reason for claiming exceptions in favor of the clergy. The gravity of this reason must not be disregarded.

But it is precisely for that reason that, according to my view, priests should, first and foremost, attend to the performance of their duties and not to run the risk of condemnation. I think I am all the better authorized to speak in this way, seeing that their crimes, all things considered, bear forsooth the character of political demonstration.

In taking severe steps against clergymen who are guilty of any infringement of the law, the judicial authorities of the occupying power do not apply any principle which is not in keeping with Belgian legislation. The penal code expressly punishes attacks made in the course of religious services, either against the government or against an act of public authority.

I need hardly tell your Eminence that no one more than the Governor General deplores the necessity of enforcing the code against priests. He regrets to see the clergy thus losing the respect and sullying the dignity appertaining to the ecclesiastical state. For this reason it is most desirable that for the future priests should not commit any breach of the law and that thus the occupying power should not be constrained to inflict punishment on them. As justice must pursue its course with impartiality, it is only by preventing measures that it is possible to avoid the consequences resulting from the political action of the clergy, and to gain that end there is only one means, namely, that ecclesiastical authority should see to it that the clergy confine themselves to their religious duties.

The Governor General has previously tried to gain some co-operation toward this end. I may inform your Eminence that he is inclined to give it another trial. With this end in view, he is about to address a letter to the bishops. He will explain the situation to them and will entreat them to influence their inferiors, in order to bring crimes and condemnations to an end.

I should be content could I hope that my frank and straightforward explanation might contribute to dissipate all evident misunderstandings. The occupying power, I permit myself to repeat, much regrets being obliged to condemn guilty priests chiefly because it sees in the clergy representa-

tives of the social order, the moral authority of which should remain unimpaired.

As, on the other hand, the ecclesiastical authorities realize that these convictions entail grave inconveniences, I cannot help openly stating to your Eminence that in all this I would like to keep in view our common interests. I also think that my straightforward language cannot but favor mutual understanding and perhaps promote a collaboration in which neither party would sacrifice anything to the other.

I present to your Eminence the expression of my distinguished consideration and have the honor to be yours very devotedly,

(Signed) LANCKEN.

Political Department of the Government General of Belgium. *Brussels, June* 3, 1916.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

I have the honor to inform your Eminence that at the moment of forwarding you my letter of May 31, I had not then learned of the following case; that is the only reason why I did not mention it. Last Sunday a solemn religious ceremony took place in the Cathedral of Antwerp in the presence of your Eminence.

The sermon which was preached on the occasion by Frere Pauwels turned in great part on purely political topics. I do not wish to enter into details, but simply to state the fact that the preacher departed manifestly from his religious functions, and that the presence of your Eminence lent to this manifestation a special significance. It will be difficult for other priests not to perceive in this sermon an encouraging example. Accordingly the occupying power cannot allow this incident to pass unnoticed, and it should at any rate have the assurance that Frere Pauwels has been invited by his ecclesiastical superiors to limit his activity to his religious duties.

Up to now I have mentioned this incident to no one. In the general interest I should be glad to learn that your Emi-

nence has taken care to restrain Frere Pauwels from indulging for the future in like manifestations.

(Signed) LANCKEN.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
June 8, 1916.

To Baron von der Lancken, Chief of the Political Department, Government General, Brussels.

My dear Baron—I am very grateful to you for having seconded my request in favor of Madame Wibin and her children and I shall be pleased if you kindly convey my thanks to the Governor General.

I was given permission some months ago to visit two priests imprisoned at St. Gilles. At this moment several priests of my diocese are detained in the same prison, notably, unless I am mistaken, Frere Devroye, Canon Cocheteux, the Curates Wittemberg and Van Houdt, perhaps others whose names have not reached me.

I shall have several hours of leisure at Brussels on Wednesday, June 21. You would greatly oblige me if you could authorize me to visit on that day at 4 p. m. (German time) the priests of my diocese detained in the prison of St. Gilles.

I shall have the honor of answering separately the questions of general interest which your despatches No. 5035 and No. 5920 treat of.

Accept, Baron, the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
June 24th, 1916.

To Baron von der Lancken, Chief of the Political Department, Government General, Brussels.

My dear Baron—The letter I. 5035, which you did me the honor to write on May 31st, answers very courteously the considerations contained in my letter of May 23 relative to the severe treatment meted out, especially of late, to the clergy.

It never once entered my head to beg privileges for the clergy, nor the systematic exercise, on your part, of the prerogative of pardon. When a punishment is justified and deserved priests courageously submit to it without murmuring. If, indeed, the military tribunals confine themselves to enforcing, as regards the clergy, the provisions of the Belgian code, to which your esteemed letter alludes, we should not think of complaining.

The letter of May 23rd has in view a complex situation where many surprising incidents synchronize. Thus at certain epochs, following upon events that have no connection with anything criminal, justice suddenly redoubles alike its zeal in seeking for real or imaginary infringements of regulations and its severity in repressing them. We find ourselves during these last months in the presence of an acute crisis of judicial activity. Perquisitions, preventive arrests, convictions have kept increasing, while the clergy has made no change in its previous attitude.

Then there are certain proceedings of which I submit two specimens to your consideration. A seminarist on Easter Monday was going on his holiday. At the railway station of Enghien his luggage was examined; he was then taken to Braine-le-Comte and from there to Mons, where he was condemned and imprisoned for several days, merely for taking with him some photographs of his Cardinal-Archbishop.

M. Van Houdt, curate at Tervueren, had already undergone a year's imprisonment at St. Gilles on the charge of having furnished a young man, who wished to join our army, with information about the route. His detention having come to an end, the good priest had just peacefully resumed his ministry. But the German authorities, recollecting that he had formerly in January, 1915, refused to give an undertaking not to read from the pulpit the Pastoral entitled "Patriotism and Endurance," did not hesitate to make him face a second time the alternative of paying a fine of 100 marks or undergoing a week's imprisonment. At the present moment the worthy curate of Tervueren is in prison.

I thank you, Baron, for having been so good as to intrust to me by your esteemed letter of June 3rd (No. 5020), the duty of looking into the case of Frere Pauwels. As I was present at Frere Pauwels's sermon, I am in a position to speak to you of it with complete knowledge of the subject.

The Rev. Frere did not attack the occupying power. On the contrary, he expressly declared that he would refrain from uttering one single offensive word and make it his duty, if overcome by emotion, to restrain the ardor of his patriotism.

He had taken for the subject of his discourse an explanation of the encyclical "Rerum novarum" of Leo XIII on the condition of the working classes. The gathering, indeed, had been called to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the promulgation of this pontifical encyclical.

The preacher had chosen for his text these words of the Sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after justice." That was his exordium. Then at once, directing his thoughts toward the Socialists, he affirmed and established the natural necessity of social inequality, and with some warmth demanded that it should be respected by all, as the expression of the order established by Providence. He traced out for masters and workmen their mutual duties in the interest of social peace.

It is not difficult to understand that chance hearers, ignorant of the purpose of the meeting and ignorant in consequence of the social aims which actuated the audience, might have misunderstood and applied to the international struggles what the preacher said of the struggles of classes; but the faithful carefully following the speaker could not fall into that mistake.

I did, nevertheless, fear the confusion of thought, which, according to the report with which you were furnished, did actually arise. I therefore requested Frere Pauwels to come and see me, and I recommended him for the future to give his thoughts and his language greater precision, for the subjective dispositions and susceptibilities of the present

hour are also facts which a prudent preacher should consider.

I have received, my dear Baron, the letter you spoke of from the Governor General.* I shall do well, I think, in deferring my answer to his Excellency, to reserve till then the examination of the questions which your correspondence only touches incidentally.

Receive, dear sir, the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

Political Department of the Government General of Belgium.

Brussels, June 16th, 1916.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

I have the honor in answer to your Eminence's two esteemed letters, dated the 8th inst., to make the following communication.

The Governor General gives you the permission which you ask for, to visit the prison of St. Gilles, where the priests Devroye, Cocheteux and Wittemberg are detained. As Frere Devroye has been summoned to appear before the tribunal of Charleroi for a suit fixed for June 19th, it will depend on the length of the pleadings whether or not he will be back by the 21st. I cannot be quite sure that the Curate Wittemberg will be in prison on that day. The Curate Van Houdt has been at liberty since June 6th. He had been arrested to undergo punishment to which he was sentenced in January, 1915.

I ask your Eminence to note that only prisoners who have already been convicted can receive visits. This permission is not granted to those who are awaiting trial.

Your Eminence speaks of a seminarist of Malines. According to precise information, I can certify that you have been totally misinformed. How could difficulties be created for a seminarist on the plea of his carrying on his person the photograph of his Cardinal at a time when this por-

* NOTE—This letter is reproduced later on.

trait is exposed for sale at all the bookstalls without the slightest opposition from the Governor General?

If the seminarist was arrested, it was not on account of portraits which he had, but because his identity papers were not in order. When the competent authorities had ascertained his identity he was set at liberty. He was not compelled to appear before any tribunal.

I ask myself if, in certain reports furnished to your Eminence regarding various incidents, it is not needful to take account of "subjective dispositions" or personal ties of which your Eminence speaks in regard to Frere Pauwels. At any rate, it appears that the objective reasons of the occupying power's procedure are seldom regarded from a wholly impartial standpoint.

Concerning the sermon complained of, which was preached by Frere Pauwels, the Governor General, to whom I have made a report, has learned with satisfaction of your Eminence's speedy intervention. He hopes the results of this intervention will continue to make themselves felt.

I present to your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem. Yours devotedly,

(Signed) LANCKEN.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
June 25th, 1916.

To Baron von der Lancken, Chief of the Political Department, Government General, Brussels.

My dear Baron—I am very grateful for the permission you obtained for me to visit MM. Cocheteux and Wittemberg detained at the prison of St. Gilles. It was a consolation to see them again. As you had conjectured, Frere Devroye was still at Charleroi. I presume that the permission already granted me is available for the next occasion I may have to see him.

Would you be kind enough to say to the Governor General for me that I am pleased he did not pursue Frere Pauwels' case any further.

Let me assure you, Baron, that you have received a misleading report of the incident mentioned in my letter of the

8th, regarding the seminarist, Emile Mertens. It may be that the ultimate finding of the court in the case of this seminarist does not mention the circumstance that he carried portraits of his archbishop; but the examination at Enghien and Braine-le-Comte dwelt long and pointedly on this fact. The student was arrested April 24th at Enghien, detained at Braine-le-Comte the 25th, taken to prison at Mons the 26th and before being set at liberty, which was on the 28th, he had to undergo a fresh examination, which had nothing whatever to do with the previous examination. It is very likely that you have received only information regarding this last.

You are quite right in pointing out that my portrait is on sale in the shops, but you seem to be unaware that this sale was more than once forbidden, especially during a definite period at Namur and Dinant. But this is very unimportant and I have never complained of it to any one, my sole object being to call your attention to certain vexations and petty doings of underlings.

Receive, Baron, the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

While this correspondence was taking place between the Cardinal and Baron von der Lancken relative to the attitude of the occupying power toward priests, the Governor General, on his part, began a correspondence on the same subject. If any of the clergy are prosecuted and convicted, it is due, he maintains, to their transgressing the German decrees and taking advantage of their priestly ministry to trespass on the domain of politics. To this charge the Cardinal replies by proving that the clergy does not step outside its province while maintaining the patriotism of the people and preaching love of country and Belgian liberty.

As it progressed, the debate widened and extended to the rights of the occupying power, a question which was the subject of the long controversy between the Cardinal and Baron von der Lancken related in the preceding chapter.

Government General of Belgium, Brussels,
June 4th, 1916.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

Your Eminence will agree with me in regretting the breaches committed by priests against the occupying power and the convictions that have been the inevitable result. From the petitions for pardon addressed to me I am bound to infer that a multitude of hardships arise from the fact that priests have to be torn from their ministry to go and suffer the penalties incurred. These convictions must beyond measure be regretted, since the respect and dignity belonging to the priestly state are thereby impaired. Yet the people do not cease repeating that the fire of patriotism is a valid excuse for these priests. On the other hand, they try to find extenuating circumstances for them by saying that they are constrained to respond to the patriotic spirit of the population, even though they are aware that by acting in this manner they are transgressing my regulations.

I must declare that this opinion misconstrues completely the juridical position of the population in the occupied territory toward the occupying power. For The Hague convention (Article XLIII), which imposes on me the duty of watching over the good order and well-being of the country, was ratified in 1910 by the representatives of Belgium.

It has thus the binding force of a law of the land, to which all the population, the clergy included, are bound to submit.

I should have to reproach myself with breaking the law if for special reasons I agree to make an exception in favor of the clergy. In the administration of justice, the law does not allow any distinction of persons. I should place myself in conflict with the prerogative of pardon if I consented to remit altogether in favor of the condemned the punishment inflicted on them, without, at the same time, taking into account that the case of certain culpable priests, who have been brought to trial, exclude every act of pardon. There is but one way for priests to avoid these condemnations; they must observe a calm attitude and not

meddle in politics. And it is on that account that I appeal to your Eminence and beg of you to prevail on your subordinates, in the exercise of their ministry and in their general conduct, to abstain from all political activity, and still more not to render themselves guilty of grave breaches of regulations. I attach the utmost importance to this, that they keep from circulating clandestine publications, an offense of which latterly they have often been guilty.

May I implore your Eminence to inform me if I can count on your co-operation for this object? Moreover, I only ask for the observance of the pledges which the bishops have given for the correctness of the clergy's attitude.

I present to your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) BARON VON BISSING,
Lieutenant General.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
June 23d, 1916.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Your Excellency kindly writes in your esteemed letter of June 4th (No. 5139) that you deplore the penalties inflicted on our priests by the military tribunals. But, as to these penalties, you regard them as fully justified, because necessary for the maintenance of public order, of which The Hague convention intrusts to you the keeping.

The clergy, moreover, can lay no claim to a privilege that would withdraw them from justice, nor to a continuous application of a right to pardon. There is only one method by which the clergy can escape judicial penalties, namely, to abstain from political action. Your Excellency begs my co-operation for the attainment of this result; and you appeal to the understanding come to by the Belgian bishops, in the name of the clergy, with the occupying power.

Such is, I believe, a faithful summary of the dispatch of June 4th to which my ministerial engagements have to my regret hindered me from replying sooner.

Your Excellency has good reason to deplore the severe treatment which our priests have to suffer. I also render homage to the loftiness of this sentiment and I share it with you very heartily.

With you I am concerned for the public order, but I do not agree with you as to the means of safeguarding it. The bishops and the clergy have a duty to be the foremost upholders of order. They know it, but they know also that Belgium, their country, is still, thank God, independent and that it would be iniquitous and rash to treat it like a conquered country.

Germany, which today occupies a very great portion of our provinces, but which the fortune of war may tomorrow drive back across our borders, is a belligerent nation. Belgium is also a belligerent nation. Neither of the two is victorious; neither has the right to enslave the other.

In spite of the military occupation of a great part of her provinces, our Belgian fatherland has not ceased to be of right an autonomous sovereign nation. Our respect and love for the soil and for our Belgian liberties are then for all of us an honor and a duty. To realize this honor and to preach this duty forms part of the clergy's social mission. In these troubled times in which we live each soul has the right to ask of his pastor: What is my duty? Who represents in my case authority? What have I to do to render to God the things that are of God and to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's?

Well, sir, apart from some heated expressions which escape at times from even the most cautious, in the heat of delivery and which cannot be taken literally when it is a question of estimating the general spirit of a social class, the preaching of the clergy has not overstepped, in safeguarding patriotism, the limits which I have just defined. A score of times I have personally examined the sermons that have been denounced by the civil authority or by the military courts. I have always found that the accused preacher had simply affirmed, without affront to the occupying power, that the Belgian fatherland is whole and united, that the

sole legitimate authority for the Belgian conscience is King Albert, his government, his magistracy and his army.

Were you willing, Excellency, to grasp this elementary truth of jurisprudence, the conflicts between us would come to an end.

Your predecessor, the late Baron von der Goltz, had understood it. It is a rash thing for you to wish to do violence to the noblest feeling of a people's conscience. "I ask of no one," he said in a proclamation issued at Brussels, September 2d, 1914, "I ask of no one to renounce his patriotic sentiments."

Your Excellency has not disavowed this noble proclamation.

It is in showing respect for our patriotic feelings that the occupying power will find the most solid guarantee for public order. The Belgian bishops anticipated this respect when, on February 5th, 1915, in the agreement to which your letter alludes, they wrote: "The bishops have no intention to strike a blow at public order; and if ever a member of the clergy were in this regard forgetful of his duty, or if the German authorities regarded him as such, we ask but one thing, namely, that the case be brought before the bishop of the diocese to which this member of the clergy is found to belong."

Your Excellency appeals to Article XLIII of The Hague convention and reminds us that Belgium was a party thereto. We are aware of it. We make all the articles of the convention our own and earnestly demand their application. But this Article XLIII precisely requires the occupying power to insure as far as possible public order "by respecting, except in the case of absolute necessity, the laws in force in the country occupied."

Apply to us the Belgian constitution wherever it refers to the liberty of religious preaching, bring before our ecclesiastical court doubtful cases. In this way you will do what is most prudent and most just to insure the order of public life, "by respecting, save in absolute necessity, the laws in force in the country."

Has not the method adopted by the Belgian episcopate

and followed by the clergy established its reputation? Very soon two years will have elapsed since our people have had to put up with the foreigner, his requisitions, his domiciliary visits, his threats, his condemnations; but not a single revolutionary blow has been struck. Not one of your soldiers has been molested.

In my own turn, Baron, I confidently state my conclusions. We are bound both of us, one in the civil and military order, the other in the religious and moral order, to work together for the public welfare. As our point of departure let us take the law, I mean the law both natural and international, which recognizes the moral sovereignty of Belgium as a country. Without attacking the occupying power and beyond any danger of revolt, let this Christian patriotism be maintained which, in a pastoral letter long before the war, I did not hesitate to call a religious virtue, i. e., "the piety of patriotism."

I do not deny that you have your part to play when you close all avenues leading abroad, and you arrest those of our fellow countrymen who attempt to cross the frontiers; but do not treat as traitors these heroic young fellows who, at the risk of their liberty and their life, have the ambition to go and enroll themselves in our armies. Tolerate no longer the military courts that regard the purest civic virtue as treason.

No longer condemn the teachers of youth for having approved, or for not having disapproved, a legitimate desire for the exercise of valor; do not inflict imprisonment or fine for their failing to denounce to the vengeance of your tribunals a pupil, perhaps a spiritual son.

No longer make it a crime for generous souls to refuse a morsel of bread, an alms, a temporary shelter to the man of the people who tears himself away from his fireside to fly to the defense of his fatherland. Do not punish charity.

Do not set traps for noble young fellows by inviting them to furnish or transmit correspondence or uncensored documents to keep recruits and to betray companions in misfortune.

When a wretched young fellow is arrested, do not uselessly prolong his preventive detention. Grant him counsel to sustain him and to defend him before his judges. He has that right; see to it that there is some proportion between the crime and the penalty. Stop the promiscuous awarding of penal servitude, the pain of death, as deterrent to breaches of the law.

We claim for the clergy neither exceptional regulations nor a systematic application of the right of pardon. We only want a genuine interpretation of the law.

Is it not astounding, in truth, that Belgians are reduced to ask for strict justice?

When the German army invaded our territory, the Chancellor of the empire avowed in the face of the world that Germany was violating our rights; he promised to leave nothing undone to repair our wrongs. It is not then the simple respect for justice that we ought to look for at her hands but earnest good-will, a spirit of reparation, an efficacious desire to reduce for us to a minimum all the disagreeable consequences of an occupation unjustifiable from its very inception.

Receive, sir, the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

Government General of Belgium, Brussels,
P. A. I. 5898. *June 28th,* 1916.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

I acknowledge receipt of your Eminence's esteemed letter of the 23rd inst. First of all, to avoid all confusion, I ask you to note that in my letter of June 4th (No. 5193) I did not deplore the severe and deserved condemnations incurred by priests before military courts; I simply manifested my lively regret to discover that in certain dioceses, in spite of all my efforts to get superior ecclesiastics to influence the priests subject to them, the number of breaches against my regulations committed by members of the clergy had not diminished.

Even lately ecclesiastics have not hesitated to profane the sacred character of their churches by poisoning therein the spirit of the Belgian people and inspiring it with hatred. From the pulpit they have hurled against my country and the occupying power insults and baseless accusations. They ought to be punished for having been, if not the authors, at least the propagators of publications vilely insulting.

We could not tolerate the assistance given by priests to secret organizations having for their object to injure Germany and increase the forces of our enemies already so considerable, by permitting Belgians of military age to cross the frontier.

Although I do not indulge the hope that these fresh declarations will result in changing your Eminence's opinion on the grave breaches of which members of the clergy never cease to render themselves guilty, yet I cannot omit a refutation of the mistaken notions which seem to form the basis of your judgment.

I regard it as my chief duty to protect most energetically, in the part of Belgium which we occupy, the German interests of which his Majesty the Emperor has made me the guardian. I should fail in this duty if in compliance with your Eminence's wishes I refrained from prosecuting those who commit acts that endanger the security of the empire and those who urge the people to commit them.

Be also impartial enough, my Lord Cardinal, to respect our patriotic feelings, you who not only pay homage to the patriotic demonstrations of the clergy and people of Belgium in general, but encourage them in circumstances which are of a nature to create intolerable situations. As to the rest of my letter, I feel bound, in order to avoid misunderstandings which might easily have unpleasant consequence for those concerned, to make the following statement: During the occupation the only legal political power in the occupied territory is what I exercise. To this power alone is obedience due and not to the king of the Belgians and his government, whose power in the occupied territory is in fact and in law extinct. Should this obedience

be not willingly given, I am then compelled to exact it by the enforcement of the German penal laws.

These laws are applicable to all the inhabitants of the occupied territory without any exception as to persons. The courts only do their duty when they enforce these laws justly and without consideration of the person arraigned. According to the principles of German jurisprudence, they must not yield to any influence nor permit themselves to be enticed to deliver judgment according to instructions.

On myself alone rests the responsibility for the maintenance of order and the welfare of the population, and it belongs to me alone to judge of the fitness of the steps that must be taken for its preservation. I have never ceased to appreciate the Belgians' patriotism nor have I forbidden its legitimate display.

It is now two years since I accepted the office of Governor General. If during that time in spite of the incessant instigation to hatred and passive resistance against the state of things caused by the occupation the Belgian people have remained calm, and, as I acknowledge, given proof of being better disposed toward us, it must surely be ascribed to the steps I have taken, steps that are just but which necessity at times renders severe. In so doing I am conscientiously performing a duty, which is to watch over the welfare of the land intrusted to my care and the fulfillment of which I have much at heart.

I present to your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem. Yours devotedly,

(Signed) BARON VON BISSING,
Lieutenant General.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
July 12th, 1916.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General of Belgium, Brussels.

Baron—I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your Excellency's letter of June 28th. In the mind of the writer perhaps that letter required no reply; but considered from my point of view it demands some explanations.

First. Your Excellency reverts once more to the sermons of the clergy and censures them in terms which I prefer not to repeat. But why has your Excellency so brusquely cut short a correspondence which we were carrying on in regard to that very subject and which you yourself had invited?

You have, indeed, at various times brought ill-defined charges against the sermons of our priests; I ventured to ask of you more precise accusations and in several cases you did not refuse. In each of these I forthwith held an inquiry and laid the results before you. In every case the charges were proved unfounded. This rebutting method of inquiry—the only means of shedding light on the cases under consideration—happily stopped several hasty condemnations. Would it then be equitable or wise to abandon now this mode of procedure and fall back upon accusations which cannot be investigated?

Second. Another complaint. Certain members of the clergy assist lads to join the Belgian army. But your Excellency surely is not unaware that Belgium and Germany, through no fault of ours, are two enemy belligerent nations? These noble souls that run the risk of the most severe punishments, even electrocution, to go and defend their country, can you impute it as a crime to a priest that he should share this admiration? Some of these brave youths fall by the way victims of their patriotic bravery. Are they not more than a sufficient ransom for your military regulations?

Others reach their goal and add a few units to the handful of soldiers of the Yser, but can they cause disquietude to an army of eight and a half million? This last remark is not mine, but it was flung at us months ago by one of your most prominent chiefs. It was not the time then to take it up.

Third. Your Excellency has, you say, to guard German security, "die deutsche Sicherheit," and must therefore take account of every act likely to bring about unendurable situations, "unhaltbaren Zustanden."

Such indefinite expressions are not of a kind to promote

the understanding for which your Excellency had craved my co-operation. Certainly the Governor General's vigilance should include the whole army of occupation; but should it sacrifice thereto the Belgian people? Your Excellency is kind enough to repeat that you have at heart the welfare of the country intrusted to your administration. A country's chief blessing is its liberty. Treat, I pray you, the Belgians as a nation not yet conquered. Do not exasperate them by claiming to stifle in their breasts their hopes of a better time to come. Your vigilance will be thereby less frequently demanded.

We too are concerned to reconcile the welfare of the Belgians with the security of the Germans, for we aim at respecting the rights of nations. Thus whatever turn military operations may one day take, we shall preach to our people what we have preached to them long before your regiments ever trod the Belgian soil, namely, that we must commit to our army and to our loyal allies the defense of our liberty.

Your Excellency sees but one danger to the public order, the extolling of the virtue of patriotism. I see another, the exasperation of a people unjustly oppressed.

Your Excellency sees but one remedy for the evil that you fear, Might. I see another and a better one, respect for civic dignity.

I believe I understand better than any foreigner the Belgian people's soul.

Fourth. Anxious to obviate misunderstandings, your Excellency devotes the second part of your letter to a statement of principles on the situation of the occupying power, on the responsibilities which weigh upon you, on the method by which you intend to govern us.

On this point, Baron, there is between us a fundamental and irreducible divergence.

A nation has only one legitimate supreme authority; two are quite inconceivable.

As long as Belgium is not recognized by international law as a constituent part of the German Empire, the occu-

pied provinces legally and morally depend on their legitimate government and on it alone.

The occupying power possesses an authority *de facto*, but can claim no "right" to such possession.

The occupied country has to submit to the "de facto" authority.

Obedience, as a moral obligation, is due only to the authority of the legitimate government, which, despite the momentary obstacles limiting its sovereign prerogative, is and remains the government of the country.

I am quite aware this legitimate government requires us to accept, without any signs of external disaffection, the regulations of the occupying power, so long as these violate neither international law nor our dignity as patriots. I am aware also that, with these limitations, the above-mentioned government expects us to observe these regulations in order thus to spare Belgium falling into a condition worse than that which has been imposed on it by force.

It is for these reasons we respect these regulations ourselves and enjoin others to do the same.

But when the occupying power violates The Hague convention or does violence to our dignity as men or as citizens of the Belgian nation, we must raise our voice in protest. Your Excellency attempts to stifle this protest and reserves to yourself the right to speak, saying that, "You alone are qualified to judge of what the public order and the welfare of our population demand."

Excuse me, your Excellency. The Hague convention is not a decree of an occupying power, but an international contract. This contract Germany has signed in the same way as Belgium. We are powerless to restrain the power of your military arm, but we have the right, and at the same time the duty, of satisfying our conscience in reminding you that an account will be exacted from you one day before the international tribunal of The Hague and also before history of the use or misuse you have made of the weapons of power.

The empire that you represent has pledged itself at The Hague never to misuse this power, if ever it came into pos-

session of it. You are bound in conscience by this pledge. Kant, to whom must be attributed the perversion of all German philosophical speculation and against whose influence I am proud to have struggled throughout my career, divorces right from morality. Hence the notion which identifies right with an authority devoid of aught save the simple power of coercion. Against this arbitrary mental identification, justifying as it does despotism, the conscience of humanity protests.

I fear that your Excellency, in spite of your natural uprightness and religious sentiments and the promise made to us, in writing or in conversation, to alleviate our misfortunes and to heal our wounds, is dominated unconsciously by this false notion of government. Thus it is that today you declare you expect from stern severity alone the consolidation of your power of occupation.

Receive, dear Governor General, the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

CHAPTER XXV

PROTEST OF THE BISHOPS AGAINST THE ENROLLMENT IN THE GERMAN ARMY OF YOUNG BELGIANS OF GERMAN PARENTAGE

THE Imperial Government declared its intention of forcing into the rank of the German army all young men of German parentage born in Belgium, but who had become legally naturalized Belgians through having publicly declared in favor of the country of their birth. At various places, notably at Brussels, Verviers and Nivelles, a number of young men in this category were summoned to appear before the military authorities. After undergoing a medical examination they were given a temporary holiday to await being drafted.

The Cardinal, together with the Bishops of Liége, Namur and Tournai, protested against this open violation of The Hague convention.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
July 3d, 1916.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Your Excellency—The whole Belgian nation is deeply moved at the news that young men of German extraction, who have declared for Belgian nationality, are threatened with enrollment in the German army. Such a measure is opposed to The Hague convention, to which Germany has put her signature. It does violence to the deepest sentiments of our Belgian fatherland by dragging away from it its adopted children. It outrages the conscience of many young men, who, already saddened by their present inability

to serve their country, see themselves compelled to take arms against her.

For these reasons the bishops of Belgium in the interest of morality, with the guardianship of which they have been intrusted, have recourse to your Excellency. They venture to express their confidence that you will spare no effort to prevent the authorities of the empire from committing such a flagrant infringement both of the international law and the rights of conscience, and further that your Excellency will make an effort to spare our country, already so sorely tried, the infliction of so cruel a humiliation.

Kindly accept in anticipation the expression of our thanks for the intervention we solicit and feel sure you will not refuse, as also the assurance of our sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

(Signed) Th. Louis Heylen,
Bishop of Namur,

(Signed) M. H. Rutten,
Bishop of Liége,

(Signed) Am. M. Crooy,
Bishop of Tournai.

The Governor General replied neither to the bishops' letter nor to a petition on the same subject addressed to him, about the same time, by a number of notabilities of the legal and political world dwelling in occupied parts of Belgium. Nevertheless, these decrees which had begun to be put into force were allowed to lapse and the plan of forcible enrollment in the German army of young Belgians of German parentage was not carried out.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE CARDINAL'S PUBLIC ADDRESS IN THE CHURCH OF STE. GUDULE, JULY 21, 1916

THE Governor of Brussels, Lieutenant General Hurt, forbade the celebration of the National Day, July 21. In a manifesto published as early as the 17th, he prohibited under a penalty of six months and a fine of 20,000 marks any "demonstration on the occasion; such as public meetings, processions, speeches, addresses, school treats, the floral decoration of certain statues, beflagging of buildings, public or private, early closing of shops, restaurants, etc."

On the eve of the celebration appeared a further warning of the Governor, in which the public was advised to have nothing to do with a certain section of irresponsible people who, it was rumored, were endeavoring to influence the population against the observance of the decree and that penalties for infraction of the order would be applied ruthlessly and without mercy.

These threats were followed by the appearance in the streets of patrols of armored cars, destined to instill fear into the people's minds. The only result of these measures was to stimulate further the desire of the inhabitants of Brussels to manifest their patriotic ardor. Hence, while respecting the letter of the decree, they had recourse to numerous devices, each more ingenious than the other, in celebrating the National Day. In most churches a dirge was substituted for the customary Te Deum. The ceremony in the Church of St. Gudule was graced by the presence of the Cardinal. The great church on the occasion was filled to overflowing; hundreds of people, unable to obtain access to it, stationed themselves in the adjoining square.

After the gospel the Cardinal ascended the pulpit in

vestments and miter and pronounced the following allocution:

"Before beginning I want you to do an act of self-restraint; should any of you feel overcome by strong emotion, kindly refrain from showing it. The hour for expressing adequately the intensity of your feelings has not yet struck.

" 'Jerusalem facta est habitatio exterorum; dies festi ejus conversi sunt in luctum.' (Jerusalem was made the habitation of strangers; her festival days were turned into mourning.)—Machabees, Book I, chapter I, verses 40-41.

"My dearest Brethren—We were to have gathered here together to celebrate the eighty-fifth anniversary of our national independence.

"Fourteen years hence on this very day our cathedrals restored and our churches rebuilt will open wide their doors. The people will crowd them, our King Albert, standing on his throne, will freely bow his unconquered head before his Majesty, the King of Kings. The Queen and the royal princes will form a group around him. We ourselves shall hear the joyous pealing of our bells and throughout the entire country, under the vaults of our temples, we Belgians, hand in hand, will renew our oaths to God, to our sovereign, to our liberties, while our bishops and priests, true interpreters of the soul of the nation, shall intone in the enthusiasm of their gratitude a triumphal Te Deum.

"Today the hymn of joy dies on our lips.

"The Jewish people in captivity in Babylon sat and wept on the banks of the Euphrates and watched the waters of the river as they flowed, while their harps hung silent amidst the skirting willows. Who would have the courage to sing the song of Jehovah in a strange land? 'O Jerusalem, our fatherland,' cried the psalmist, 'if I forget thee, let my right hand be forgotten! Let my tongue cleave to my jaws, if I do not remember thee, if I make not thee the beginning of my joy.'

"The concluding words of the psalm, embodying a kind of curse, we pass over in stern silence. We are not of the Old Testament that sanctioned the law of retaliation, 'Eye

for an eye, tooth for a tooth.' No words of hatred shall sully our lips, cleansed as they are by the fire of Christian love.

"To hate is to aim at doing ill and to take pleasure in it. Whatever may be our sorrows, we will not pursue with hatred those that inflict them on us.

"National union of hearts is linked among us to world-wide brotherhood.

"But above this sentiment of world-wide brotherhood we place respect for absolute right, without which intercourse either between individual or between nations is impossible.

"Hence with the greatest authority in Christian theology, St. Thomas Aquinas, we declare the prosecution of crime by competent authority is a virtue. Crime, injustice, disturbances of the public peace, whether by individuals or by bodies of men, must be repressed. Conscience is disturbed, troubled and harassed so long as the guilty, according to the common expression, so true and at once so expressive, has not been put in his place. To put things and men in their proper place is to re-establish order, restore equilibrium, to reintroduce peace on a basis of justice. Public vengeance understood in this way may offend the susceptibility of feeble minds. It is, nevertheless, according to St. Thomas Aquinas, the expression, the law, of charity and of its flame, which is zeal. The consequent suffering inflicted on people is a weapon for vindicating outraged right, not an aim in itself.

"How otherwise love order without detesting disorder? How wish for peace intelligently without eliminating whatever undermines it? How, lastly, love one's own brother—that is, wish him well—without at the same time desiring to see his mind willingly or by compulsion conform to the immutable dictates of justice and truth?

"It is from such high standpoints that war must be viewed in order to understand its grandeur. Once more I repeat there may be certain effeminate souls, in whose eyes war is merely the exploding of mines, the bursting of shells, the butchery of men, the shedding of blood and the piling

up of corpses. Short-sighted politicians may still be found with low views, for whom the stakes of battle are but a passing interest, the seizure or reconquest of ground or of a province.

"No. If, in spite of its horrors, war—understand a just war—possesses such stern attractions, it is simply because it is the disinterested act of a people that yield up, or is disposed to yield up, its most precious possessions, its life, in defense and in vindication of something that cannot be weighed, or counted, or purchased—justice, honor, peace and liberty.

"Have you not felt during the last two years that the war, the keen sustained attention you bestow upon it (even from here), purifies you, delivers you from dross, calms you, makes you look up to something better than yourself? It is toward the ideal of justice and honor that you rise. Its charm lifts you up.

"And because this idea—if it is not a vain delusion, which takes flight like the unsubstantial figment of a dream —ought to have its seat in a living, subsisting subject, I am never tired of asserting this truth which keeps us under its yoke, viz., that God reveals Himself as the Master overruling events and the wills of men, the Sacred Master of the Universal Conscience.

"Oh, if we were able to clasp in our arms our heroes, who at the front are fighting for us or, in their underground shelters, impatiently await their turn to advance to the firing line; if we were allowed to catch and understand the beatings of their hearts, is it not this they would say to us: 'I am doing my duty, I am offering myself a victim of justice.' And you wives and mothers, relate to me in your turn the beauty of these tragic years; wives whose every thought, sad but at the same time resigned, goes out to the absent one, telling him of your longings, your long waiting and your prayers; mothers whose hearts are rent by the anguish of every minute, you who have given up your sons and will not take them back, as we contemplate you, our admiration for you at every moment holds us breathless.

"The head of one of our noblest families wrote to me:

'Our son of the Seventh Regiment of the Line has fallen; my wife and I feel our hearts broken, but if need be we would gladly give him again.'

"A curate of the capital has just been condemned to twelve years' penal servitude. I was allowed to go in his cell to embrace and bless him. 'I have,' said he, 'three brothers at the front. I believe I am here for aiding my youngest brother, a lad of seventeen, to join his elder brothers; one of my sisters is here in a neighboring cell; but, thanks be to God, my mother is not alone; she has told us so; besides she does not weep.'

"Do not our mothers make us think of the mother of the Machabees? What lessons of moral grandeur! Both here and on the roads leading to exile in the prisons and concentration camps in Holland and Germany.

"Do we reflect sufficiently how much those brave men must suffer, who from the very beginning of the war, from the day after the defense of Liége and Namur, or the retreat from Antwerp, have seen their military career destroyed and now chafe under their inability to bear arms; those guardians of our rights and our commercial freedom, who, by their bravery, have been reduced to inactivity? There is courage in leaping to the attack; there is no less in holding back from it; there is even more virtue at times in suffering than in action. And these two years of the Belgian people's calm submission to the inevitable, this enduring tenacity which made a humble woman, before whom the possibilities of an early peace were discussed, to exclaim: 'Oh! for us there is no haste; we can still wait.' How beautiful and full of instruction for the coming generations! This is what we must consider, my brethren, namely, the magnanimity of the nation in sacrifice, our universal and persevering brotherhood in afflictions, in mourning and in the same invincible hope; that is what we must bear in mind in order to estimate our Belgian fatherland at its true worth.

"Now, the first authors of this moral greatness are our soldiers.

"While waiting until they return, when grateful Bel-

gium will acclaim the living and crown the memory of the fallen, let us raise up in our souls an imperishable monument of religious gratitude. Let us pray for those who are no more and exclude no one from our compassion.

"The blood of Christ has flown for all. It is probable that they are expiating in purgatory the last traces of human frailty. It belongs to you to hasten their entrance into paradise. Succor the distress of the poor man who is known to you, of the poor man who is bashful. Give your superfluity to those who lack the needful. Assist at the mass which is celebrated each week in your parish church for our departed soldiers, take with you your children, get them to communicate and communicate with them.

"Pray also for those who stand ever in the line of fire! At the moment I am speaking to you, say to yourselves: Some are now in their agony, the vision of eternity has risen up before them. Let us think of them and obtain for them a holy death.

" 'Our soldiers are our masters,' wrote recently a French academician; 'they are our teachers, our leaders, our judges, our supporters, our true friends; let us be worthy of them and imitate them. To induce us not to do less than our duty, they are invariably disposed to do more than theirs.'

"The hour of our deliverance draws near, but has not yet struck. Let us remain patient. Let not our courage falter. Let us leave to divine Providence the care of perfecting our national education.

"Young women and young girls, let me ask if you regard with sufficient gravity the present hour. Pray, do not show yourselves strangers to your country's mourning; there are fashions and attitudes insulting to sorrow. Modesty is for you a halo and a virtue; it is, moreover, today a patriotic duty. You also should think of the privations and endurance of our soldiers.

"Let our minds be permeated with the great law of the austerity of life. 'How much ought we not,' continues the patriot I have just quoted, 'how much ought we not, in the relatively easy conditions and in the less exposed regions which are ours and which do not merit the name of war

zone, to apply our efforts to practice self-restraint, to be more simple in our life and ways, and, like our soldiers, but in our own way, to brace ourselves up to exercise more effective energy? Let us not squander a moment of our lives in amusement or relaxation. Let us not spend a minute of our lives, save for the splendid gain for which our brothers sacrifice so lovingly their own.'

"And just as at the front our heroes offer us the marvelous and consoling spectacle of an inseparable union, of a military brotherhood which nothing can impair; thus in our ranks, less serried and with a more elastic discipline, we shall aim, none the less, at preserving the same cohesion, the same patriotic concord. We shall respect the truce imposed on our disputes by the great cause which alone should employ and absorb all our means of attack and fighting; and if wicked and wretched men do not understand the urgency or the beauty of this national harmony and still determine in spite of everything to foment the passions which at other times divide us, we will turn away and continue, without deigning to reply, to remain faithful to the pact of union, friendship, loyal and sincere confidence, which, in spite of them, we have made with them, under the grand inspiration of the war.

"The approaching date of the first centenary of our independence should find us stronger, more courageous, more united than ever. Let us prepare for it by work, by patience, by brotherhood. When in 1930 we remember the dark years of 1914-1916, they will appear to us brighter, more majestic and, provided today we know how to make up our mind, they will prove the happiest and most fruitful of our national history. 'Per crucem ad lucem.' Light springs from sacrifice."

At the end of the service the organ played the "Brabanconne." Up to that point the congregation, obedient to the recommendations of the Cardinal, had restrained their emotion, but scarcely had the last note of the national hymn died away than spontaneously a cry burst forth from every breast: "Long live Belgium! Long live the King!"

At the termination of the ceremony the Cardinal, ac-

cording to custom, was conducted processionally to the deanery situated close to the church. The crowd pressed up to the door of the sacristy and met him with the cry: "Long live the Cardinal! Long live liberty!"

In the evening about 8 o'clock passers-by recognized the Cardinal's motorcar waiting at the gate of St. Louis's Institute. A crowd at once collected and the instant the Cardinal entered his carriage to return to Malines he was acclaimed with enthusiastic shouts by a crowd that every moment grew denser. A German officer appeared on the scene, accompanied by a detachment of soldiers, and brutally ordered a bayonet charge and several persons were wounded. The Cardinal's motorcar rapidly disappeared in the direction of Malines. The following day Lieutenant General Hurt sent a letter to the Burgomaster of Brussels from which we extract the following passages:*

"When the Cardinal in the evening passed through the city in his motorcar, a demonstration hostile to the German authorities took place of such a nature as to rouse the population to resistance and ill-considered acts. You must agree, sir, that no occupying power in the world could tamely submit to such provocation.

"In consequence I have suggested to the Governor General that he should inflict a fine upon the entire population of Brussels. The Governor General has agreed to my proposal and has inflicted a fine of a million marks."

The incidents that marked that day, July 24th, occasioned an exchange of letters between his Eminence and the Governor General.

Government General of Belgium, Brussels,
July 24th, 1916.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

Throughout the country generally July 24th passed without incident. It was only at Brussels that a demonstration took place incompatible with the regime of occupation.

* NOTE—This letter was published by the censored press. The above text is taken from "La Belgique" of July 24.

This demonstration started with your Eminence yourself. The reports which have reached me inform me that during the address you delivered at St. Gudule's you expressed yourself as follows: "The hour of deliverance draws near, but has not yet struck. He who bears the responsibility of this frightful war should receive its deserts. He that let loose this storm upon Belgium must be punished.

"My dear brethren, pray for the martyrs of liberty, remain firm and unshaken in your hope, your deliverance is at hand.

"A curate of our diocese has been sentenced to twelve years' penal servitude, a nun in our holy church to six years' imprisonment. Pray for these martyrs who languish in a prison cell for having served their king and country.

"1830 . . . an historic date, when the people of Belgium wrung their liberty from their oppressors . . . after fourteen years and a few days all the churches of Belgium will resound with the Belgian people's shouts of joy and gladness."

Before coming to a decision respecting this incident, I pray your Eminence to vouchsafe me, as early as possible, an explanation of this affair and inform me if the extracts quoted above reproduce exactly the words uttered by you. Misunderstandings have been caused in similar cases. Accordingly, I deem it important for your Eminence to communicate to me this part of your address. It would interest me especially to learn if your Eminence spoke with such certainty of the approaching hour of deliverance.

If this is so, you will kindly inform me of the grounds on which you base your assertions. Because of the importance which I attach to this fact, I should be grateful to your Eminence if you would give me a detailed account.

This incident dispenses me from answering your esteemed letter of the 12th inst. As I cannot admit the view there expressed, even if purely theoretical, I have requested the chief of my political department to reply to your Eminence.

I present to your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) BARON VON BISSING,
Lieutenant General.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
July 25th, 1916.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General of Belgium.

I am making it a duty to reply by return of post, as your Excellency desired in the letter No. 6713, you did me the honor to address to me on July 24th and which I received this morning. It is fortunate that your Excellency had the good inspiration to submit to me the report made to you of the discourse which I preached at St. Gudule on the 21st inst. Nothing is more fitting than that I should go straight to the point. This method, had it been always followed, would have spared us in the past the misunderstandings, the recurrence of which we are today both equally anxious to prevent.

Desirous of removing, as adequately as may be, your Excellency's anxiety, I will give in parallel columns the charges made against me in your report and the text of my sermon.

This report, containing twenty-four lines within quotation marks, puts into my mouth nine propositions. Of these nine, four are absolute fiction, one reproduces faithfully a line of my discourse, the remaining four were indeed spoken by me, but neither in the sense nor in the context given in the report.

1. My dear brethren, pray for the martyrs of liberty, remain firm and unshaken in your hope; deliverance is at hand.	1. I have nowhere spoken of the martyrs of liberty.
2. A nun of Holy Church has been sentenced to six years' imprisonment.	2. I have nowhere mentioned a nun, or our Holy Church, or any woman sentenced.

3. Pray for the martyrs who languish in a prison cell for having served their king and country.	3. I have nowhere spoken of martyrs, or of prisoners languishing in prison for having served their king and country.
4. 1830 . . . a historic date, when the Belgian people wrung their freedom from their oppressors. . . . Our brave king and queen . . . will be carried in triumph. . . .	4. I have nowhere spoken of the king and queen or the royal princes who would be carried in triumph through the ranks of the heroic Belgian army.
5. A curate of our diocese has been sentenced to twelve years' penal servitude.	5. This text is correct. I said, in fact: "A curate of the capital has just been sentenced to twelve years' penal servitude."
6. The hour of deliverance is near, but has not yet struck.	6. This I said. In fact, I said: "The hour of deliverance draws near, but has not yet struck."
Your Excellency does me the honor of putting to me the following question: "I should be very interested to know if it is a fact that your Eminence has spoken with such certainty of the approaching hour of the liberation of Belgium. If so, would you be good enough to inform me what are the grounds on which this statement is based.	I keenly regret that I cannot fix more precisely the date of our deliverance, and I suspect that if the Governor General gave me access to my King, or allowed me to visit Joffre, or Robertson, Von Falkenhayn or Von Hindenburg, we should not learn much more. Hence, after the phrase with which you find fault, I added immediately: "Let us continue to be patient and not allow

our courage to falter. Let us leave to Providence the care of completing our national education." I exhorted my hearers "to endurance and to patience," and I mentioned the example of "a poor woman who, hearing the possibility of an early peace discussed, said: 'Oh, for us there is no hurry; we can still wait.' "

7-8. He who bears the responsibility of this frightful war ought to receive his deserts.

He that has let loose this catastrophe on poor Belgium should be punished.

7-8. I did not speak specifically either of the person who let loose the scourge of actual war or the authors of the catastrophe with which Belgium has been visited. I translated into French the teaching of the great theologian, St. Thomas Aquinas. I expounded principles the application of which each one must make for himself. This theological doctrine formulates the necessary claims of recognized justice. The author of the report only heard that and he has distorted it; but it enunciates the prohibition of hatred and the law of universal brotherhood. Thus I said: "Our lips purified by the fire of Christian charity do not give utterance to words of hatred. To hate is to make another's misfor-

tune our object and to gloat over it. Whatever be our sorrows, we do not entertain hatred toward those who inflicted them. National concord among us coexists with universal brotherhood, but higher than the sentiment of universal brotherhood we place respect for absolute right, without which there can be no possible intercourse either among individuals or nations.

9. In fourteen years and some days all the churches of Belgium will vibrate with shouts of "Hoch," cries of joy will be raised by the whole Belgian population.

9. I have not made any church in Belgium vibrate with sounds of cheering—neither have I spoken of "Hochs," nor of cries of joy, but of a triumphal Te Deum. Even so, these are only trifling variations of style. But the report is captious when you translate the words in fourteen years on such a day by "in fourteen years and some days." This last touch proves how needful it is to mistrust spies who understand imperfectly the language in which our preachers express themselves, and with the hope of profitably flattering German patriotism, use every expedient to catch or put in default the honest folk on whom they spy.

In a word, sir, about half the report is fiction. Of the rest scarcely a fifth part is correct. The other four-fifths mutilates the meaning and changes the order of my thoughts.

Furthermore, I hold at your Excellency's disposition, if you wish to see it, the complete text of my sermon as it was read (for I took the precaution of writing and reading it) from the pulpit of St. Gudule.

Your Excellency is pleased to attribute to me a demonstration incompatible with the conditions of occupation. Much might be said about this demonstration, which consisted of certain shouts of joy and gratitude, with which the Belgian authorities were received, but the hour is not yet come to express on this subject all I have in my mind.

I reject the insinuation implied in this phrase, taken from your manifesto dated July 22d: "In the evening Cardinal Mercier motored through the city." I invite your Excellency to compare your accusation of: "Diese Kundgebung ist von Eurer Eminenz selbst ausgegangen"—"This demonstration originated with your Eminence himself,"—with the repeated declarations of Lieutenant General Hurt, Governor of Brussels and Brabant: "My prohibition to celebrate the national festival has induced a small number of thoughtless persons to invite the public to disobey my order. I put the inhabitants formally on their guard against instigations to effect this object." (Notice dated July 20th, 1916.) "The reckless portion of the population has invited the public, by a liberal distribution of handbills, not to obey my orders." (Notice under date July 22d, 1916.)

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

Brussels, July 28th, 1916.

Political Department of the Government General of Belgium.

The Governor General commissions me to convey his thanks to your Eminence in reply to your esteemed letter of the 25th inst. for the care and the promptness which you took to clear up all misunderstandings. The Governor Gen-

eral recognizes with pleasure that your Eminence had no intention to add to the agitation discernible among the Belgian population.

Nevertheless, his Excellency must protest against your Eminence's insinuation that the reports of the sermon preached at St. Gudule are the handiwork of spies. Not one of these reports comes from any one in our service. All come from believing Catholics, who had noted with painful surprise the impression it made on the audience. Even Belgians disapproved of your Eminence's words, for they said they must undoubtedly have excited men's minds and exercised an influence on their conduct outside the church.

Without doubt your Eminence wishes now to foster the belief that the words which you employed have been misunderstood. But simple people noticed in a special manner such phrases as "The hour of deliverance approaches, but has not yet struck." In spite of all the subtle qualifications with which your Eminence enveloped them, these phrases stick in the memory. The fact that the words spoken by your Eminence have been misconstrued is at any rate a proof that you did not clearly take into account the possible effect of your discourse.

In spite of all your good intentions, your Eminence hinders people from forming a true idea of the actual situation. Your Eminence wrote that not one of the commanders-in-chief of the armies in the field could predict the end of hostilities. Accordingly, the Governor General is at a loss to understand how your Eminence can on your own account foretell the issue of the war. In any case, the Governor General earnestly entreats your Eminence to be on your guard for the future and to avoid all misunderstandings and for this purpose to refrain from uttering in public statements liable to mislead the people. Your Eminence has declared over and over again that you knew quite well the temper of the Belgian people, but you must not lose sight of the fact that declarations made by an orator easily and very often produce effects quite opposite to those intended.

In conclusion I should like to rectify a mistake made by your Eminence. In his letter of July 24th the Governor General says: "This demonstration began with your Eminence." The words "this demonstration" referred solely to the sermon preached at St. Gudule. The Governor General had no intention of discussing with your Eminence the incidents which took place during the evening. These have already been examined by another authority. Hence the consequences which your Eminence deduces from this misunderstanding fall to the ground.

I shall shortly have the honor of answering in detail the letter which your Eminence has addressed to the Governor General dated July 12th, and shall have an opportunity also of touching on another question, which, because of the agitation that it constantly keeps alive among the Belgian people, calls for a definitive solution.

Please accept the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) LANCKEN.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
July 30th, 1916.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

I have the honor of acknowledging the receipt of your Excellency's letter No. 6827, which you commissioned Baron von der Lancken to write in your name.

In its general purport it recognizes—and I am glad of it—that my discourse of July 21st had been wrongly denounced. The report made to your Excellency was incorrect, and thus the fundamental misunderstanding is removed.

Yet, on two points of detail, the author of the letter declares that he is not satisfied. He finds that I have assumed the rôle of prophet because I have said, "The house of deliverance draws nigh." Next, that I falsely boast of knowing the temper of the Belgian people; the demonstration of the 21st proves me lacking in foresight.

But I did not say, "The hour of deliverance draws nigh" but, "The hour of deliverance draws nigh, but has not

struck. Let us persevere in patience. Do not let our courage falter. Let us commit to Divine Providence the care of perfecting our national education." The first clause taken by itself is as vague as its meaning is clear when read joined to its context. This proves once more that any two lines taken from an author are enough to hang him.

Imagine you have before you a prisoner sentenced to a year's imprisonment. After eight months of durance you say to him, "Courage, my friend, the hour of deliverance draws nigh." Do you think he does not understand? The prisoner is Belgium—she, too, understands.

But, you say, if she understands, how is it that she revolts despite your discourse, which you pretend to be soothing and comforting words? Either your words are not soothing or you do not understand the Belgian mentality.

First of all, I reply: Is this real or apparent agitation the direct effect of my sermon? Did you not acknowledge that on the 20th—that is before my sermon of the 21st was preached—signs of this agitation were already visible? If instead of threatening with six months' imprisonment or a fine of 20,000 marks any one laying a flower at the foot of a national monument, or being so bold as to close their café or shop on Independence Day, you had shown deference, even only by silence, to our national feelings, the people would not have been driven to defiance.

This is what I hinted at when I concluded my letter on the 25th with these words, which, out of respect for my correspondent, I left somewhat vague: "I did but utter words of charity and comfort; provocation must be sought elsewhere."

What is gravest in the eyes of the occupying power in the demonstration of the 21st is evidently the incident that took place, "in the evening when the Cardinal passed through the streets in his motorcar," it being understood that this demonstration brought about the sentence of condemnation pronounced by the Governor of Brussels and Brabant: "Therefore I have suggested to the Governor General that he should inflict a fine on the entire popula-

tion of Brussels. The Governor General has agreed to my suggestion and inflicted a fine of a million marks."

What was the extent of this demonstration, of which I can speak with knowledge, having myself been a witness of the event? The drive which the German Governor of Brussels and Brabant describes me as making in a motorcar through the streets of the city was one of a good hundred yards, namely from St. Louis's Institute to the point on the boulevard immediately opposite Rue de Brabant.

I took my place as quietly as possible in a closed car, the windows of which were hermetically shut. A few persons accompanied me on this short journey and cheered but without uttering a single sound that could give offense to the German authorities. The police, who had allowed the people to assemble freely near St. Louis's Institute, then ordered quite unnecessarily a bayonet charge while my car was taking the most direct route toward Malines—that is Rue de Brabant. Once the hundred yards of the boulevard were passed nobody at all followed my car. These are the facts in all their simplicity.

Frankly, is there here matter for a fine of a million two hundred and fifty thousand francs? Moreover, since your Excellency is quite willing to say that my sermon at St. Gudule was not seditious, would it not be consistent and just to remit a punishment which was justified in the eyes of the occupying power only by this alleged act of sedition?

Receive, sir, the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

For his part, the pro-burgomaster of Brussels, M. Lemonnier, in the name of the communal administration of the whole of Brussels, addressed a request to the Governor General to revise his decision. Baron von Bissing remained inflexible and the penalty was exacted.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE RIGHTS OF THE OCCUPYING POWER

In his letter of June 28th, 1916, Baron von Bissing had explained what he considered to be his rôle as Governor General and subsequently had laid down certain principles as to the position of the occupying power. The Cardinal had answered defending the theory which he had upheld in his first letter to the Governor General and which he had laid before his people in his pastoral, "Patriotism and Endurance": "The occupying power is not a lawful power; it is a power *de facto;* the only power *de jure* in Belgium is that of the King and his Government."

The Governor General never returned to the charge. It was Baron von der Lancken who resumed the discussion. The controversy between the Cardinal and the chief of the Political Department respecting the rights of the occupying power called forth an exchange of long letters, having the form of pamphlets at once political and philosophical.

Political Department of the Governor General of Belgium, Brussels, August 1st, 1916.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

In your letter addressed to the Governor General dated July 12th, your Eminence made several reflections on principles respecting the right of occupation. I have the honor to make the following observations to your Eminence on this subject.

First, I would have you take notice that it is only an exchange of theoretical views. Your Eminence expresses ideas which go far beyond the purely juridical scope of the Hague Convention. The text of the Hague Convention to which the force of an international contract has been

given (the question, in so far as it concerns us now, is chiefly treated in Chapter IV) contains not a single word relative to the question touched upon by your Eminence.

On the other hand, the positive provisions laid down in regard to occupation in this chapter are clear and precise. The exchange of views between your Eminence and myself leads us therefore into a research, which would have more than anything the character of a study preparatory to a future Hague Conference. As regards myself personally, I eagerly embrace this opportunity of expounding my views on this subject.

In the first place, I recognize that the Hague Conference contains serious gaps. From the standpoint of occupation it expressly defines the duties of the occupying power, but it is silent regarding the duties of the population of the occupied territory. In the case of a prolonged occupation, these provisions are inadequate, for the population should not be content calmly to await the decision of arms; it should also take part in the work of administration, undertaken chiefly in its interest by the occupying power. Your Eminence will grant me that some positive provisions of this kind, inserted in the Hague Convention, would have assisted the population to triumph over many scruples. At the same time, I only give this as my personal opinion.

I come now to the letter of July 12th last. Your Eminence there puts forth once more the view that the occupying power has no legitimate rights, but only power *de facto*. I should like to remind your Eminence of the provisions of articles 42 and 43 of Chapter IV. There the transfer of power *de facto* to the occupant is quite "legitimate." According to an international contract, which is in keeping with all the rules and has been ratified by the contracting parties, this transfer flows automatically from an actual state of occupation. It appears to me that your Eminence in your character of moralist and philosopher, in making use of the expression *de jure,* conceived an idea which the jurists of the Hague purposely set aside. For a division of legislative power is impossible and therefore what is *de facto* must be also *de jure.* What, after all, really matters is

merely the exercise of legislative authority and its docile acceptance by the population.

Let your Eminence then imagine what would happen if the Belgian people received at the same time contradictory orders from its former Government on the one hand, and from the occupying power on the other. On this point your Eminence does not agree with the Havre Government.

Thus, for instance, in the question of military service, the Belgian Government recognizes the lawfulness of the German regulations forbidding the crossing of the frontier. The new military laws which it has promulgated are enforceable only on Belgians living abroad. They do not mention Belgians living in the occupied territory; therefore they exclude them from the operations of the laws, and neither consider them blameworthy nor bad patriots.

In distinguishing power *de jure* and power *de facto,* in upholding the existence of a special lawful authority, your Eminence appears to me to fall into the same mistake with which, from a purely philosophical standpoint, you reproach Kant. Your Eminence, in a word, separates morality and right.

We may consider the occupation as a provisional state. It is nevertheless a juridical state, the consequences of which must be borne by all who are subject thereto. Of course each one has also the right to enter a protest against eventual infringements of the Hague Convention.

May I remind your Eminence that the Belgian courts of law in every appeal have been engaged in the question whether or no the German decrees were in conformity with the Hague Convention? It is therefore useless to require for that act of theirs a special lawful authority. This in practice has the inconvenience of appearing as a purely moral authority above the law in vigor of, and therefore in opposition to, the Hague Convention, which is the only source of right in this matter. Thus in your first Pastoral, your Eminence gave in truth an instruction which tended to obstruct the work of organization of the occupying power, by holding back the population from taking part therein.

As to myself I consider that this way of acting entails important consequences. When for instance the occupation is protracted, it may become more dangerous than a direct violation of public order, which should be repelled by armed force. The population chiefly is interested in the smooth working of affairs and each citizen should consider it his duty to co-operate therein, just as public servants do by continuing to serve their country in the exercise of their functions under the direction of the German authorities.

In this connection, I might recall the conduct of many ecclesiastics of which the Governor General complained in his letter to the Bishops. I should like your Eminence to draw a clear distinction between patriotism and the stirring up of the people against the occupying power. Would your Eminence defend the spreading of writings insulting to Germany or indeed approve of sermons in which our army is held up to scorn?

We have had the recent case of a priest who, though not a Belgian, was prosecuted for an offence of this nature. To my way of thinking a loyal patriot in the occupied territory should hold aloof from every demonstration. He would thus enjoy everybody's esteem and his attitude would be thus quite compatible with a docile acceptance of the régime of occupation.

The Governor General, acting in harmony with the ecclesiastical authorities, endeavored to shield priests from conviction. On that occasion your Eminence expressed to him your gratitude. The reasons for which, in order to hinder these abuses, the Governor General gave up having recourse to ecclesiastical discipline have been stated to your Eminence by him personally.

But it can never be feasible, according to the views expressed by your Eminence in your letter of June 23rd, to subject ecclesiastics accused of any offence to a special form of jurisdiction.

Nor can it be a question of enforcing in their regard the Belgian criminal legislation. Your Eminence here falls into some confusion. The penal Belgian laws are made for the Belgian State and it is in accordance with these laws

that judgments are delivered in the Belgian courts of justice. The occupying power protects its own interests by means of its own regulations and penal laws. This is also the case when a foreign territory is occupied, as, for instance, Greece. Your Eminence will admit that a state in occupation cannot be content with the less severe laws prevailing in peace time.

Your Eminence finds inexact the phrase "an unendurable situation" (unhaltbare Zustände). The reason for this is that if trivial misdemeanors were tolerated, political agitation would quickly assume such proportions that it could not be kept under, save by measures of extraordinary severity. And this is the case when exaggerated demonstrations of patriotism take place from the pulpit. Your Eminence, being a learned psychologist, will not deny that it is violently inconsistent to rouse the feelings of an audience and then to ask it to remain perfectly calm. If men continue to rouse patriotic feelings an "unendurable situation" will be brought about, which, in the interest of the general public, we must avoid.

I take advantage of this opportunity to draw your Eminence's attention to what continually happens in the Grotto of Lourdes at Laeken. I believe that if you would give these priests a general warning to confine themselves to their religious ministry, you would put an end to a movement which, if it grew, would necessitate the intervention of the German authorities.

I know well that your Eminence in your Pastoral entitled "Patriotism and Endurance" declared after St. Thomas Aquinas that patriotism is a Christian virtue. You hold therefore that it should be upheld in the churches. But it is needful that this should be done in a just measure, I would willingly say in a liturgical measure, and no one should transform a demonstration of patriotism into a violent political outburst, little in keeping with divine worship.

Your Eminence will permit me to recall here the words which you uttered before the representatives of the civil power, at the moment when you took possession of your high ecclesiastical office: "We shall not interfere in politics.

The day that any one of us should forget the respect due to civil power enjoying legal independence, remind him, M. Minister, of this word which is sacred to us, because it fell from the divine lips of Christ: 'Render to God the things that are God's and to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's.' "

Your Eminence at the end of your letter speaks of the influence of Kant. I do not feel called upon to begin a scientific discussion with a philosopher of such great repute. I must nevertheless remark that your Eminence does Kant an injustice when you declare that he has distorted the notion of right in the mind of the German people. His chief moral principle was this: "Act in such a wise that the maxim of thy will may serve at the same time as a principle of general legislation."

It is in this that we must seek the German conception of duty, of right and liberty, independently of all theory of knowledge. While admitting that Kant's philosophy is theoretically dangerous, it would be necessary to prove that it has penetrated into the minds of the German people. I here again permit myself to appeal to your Eminence's testimony. In a controversy with the Belgian atheists you pointed out that the great Protestant nations of Germany and the United States make it their glory to proclaim officially the sovereign rights of God over humanity.

I have done my best to follow step by step the allegations of your Eminence and I should be pleased to feel that I had thus contributed to remove misunderstandings.

I present to your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem and have the honor to be

Yours sincerely,

LANCKEN.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
August 16th, 1916.

To the Baron von der Lancken, Chief of the Political Department of the General Government, Brussels.

Dear Baron—The letter J. N. 6766, with which you honor me at the request and on behalf of His Excellency

Baron von Bissing, insists on certain general questions previously raised in the despatch of the Governor General under date of the twenty-eighth of June and on which I have in a letter of July 12 already delivered my opinion.

Your letter dated August 1st opens with a preliminary summary on the "gaps" in the Hague convention which, as you say, while defining the duties of the occupying power, does not specify those of the occupied country.

The main part of the letter comprises two sections, one treating of the occupying power, the other of patriotism and its display.

In conclusion you break a lance in favor of the moral teaching of Kant and the religious spirit of the Germans.

A few lines here will suffice to dispose of both the concluding portion of your letter as also its main section, stigmatizing once more the patriotism at once so calm and so patient of the Belgian people.

Clearly it is the first of these two subjects you deem the more interesting and on which consequently you dwell with greater zest.

In your view, by condemning the severance of law from morality, as effected by his philosophy, I have misrepresented Kant and his influence over the minds of your countrymen. You remind me, in this connection, of the fundamental precept of Kantian ethics and are of opinion that therein, independently of any theory about the source of knowledge, must be sought the "German Ideal" of duty, law and freedom.

Believe me, my dear Baron, it was far from my mind to deny the existence of ethical teaching—of a high, nay an excessively high character—in the Kantian Philosophy. I plainly asumed that in this philosophy there were two terms, viz., "right and morality," inasmuch as I find fault with Kant for having sundered them.

You are pleased to ignore this separation and to declare that "the German idea of things" subordinates legal matters to a precept of morality. So much the better for you and those who think as you do! It proves that nature is often worth more than systems of philosophy. But bear in mind

that when you separate yourself from Kant's separatist theory, you implicitly own that I was right when I found fault with him.

Not everyone, unluckily, can so readily and lightly shake himself free from any false theories he may have cherished.

These violent distinctions which Kant draws between "right" and "morality"; between morality as the object of a wholly subjective faith, and the objective knowledge of morality; between science, as the object of hurried reflection, and metaphysics, as the object of a more prolonged and penetrating reflection—these violent sunderings, I repeat, break up the unity of the inner man, shake the firmness of moral consciousness, and, as a result, favor selfish compromises, and, at time of great crisis, even surrender of principles.

How otherwise can we explain the disconcerting spectacle of a great and noble nation, which, forgetful of its pledges, its political aims, even of its deepest convictions, those, namely, of the Christian and Catholic faith, witnesses without protests, nay, I should say with cheerfulness, an outrage—a public, iniquitous, sacrilegious outrage—which a mighty empire avows itself ready to commit, with full knowledge of its deed, on a friendly, innocent and disarmed state?

I can see only one solution to this riddle. A mental atmosphere has been produced in Germany, in which legal matters are divorced from moral right. Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche have spread this through all ranks of society. In this atmosphere a militarist idea of things has been formed, has grown, has gathered strength, according to which the nation has a right to live and to develop its life to any extent, without being answerable for its doings before that moral tribunal of conscience which judges our every-day actions. Imperceptibly, armed force has ceased to seem what in truth it is—the safeguard of a right based on duty—and has become, according to public opinion, an end in itself, an end which bears its own absolute value, set outside of and above current moral principles, justifying at the same time all sacrifices and all outrages capable of bearing fruit.

The Grand Chancellor of the Empire had become imbued with these ideas—corollaries of the initial conception of a public right different from private right—to such an extent as to dare to offer Belgium a bargain of which a felony would have been the reward.

You remind me, Baron, that I have not always judged Germany so severely, for I formerly held it up as an example to those among ourselves who blushed to utter the thrice-holy name of God in public in our legislative assemblies. To these slaves to human respect I said in fact: "Look at the great Protestant nations, Germany and the United States, who glory in officially proclaiming the sovereign rights of God towards mankind, and on a pre-announced day offer to Divine Providence the solemn tribute of their thanksgivings."

I did say this, nay, and I will say it again.

But if our public men have sometimes sinned by defect, others may sin by excess. The Gospel says it is not enough to cry "Lord, Lord!" to enter into the kingdom of heaven. Religion degenerates into superstition when it does not permeate our consciences, and morality misses its mark, partially at least, when it does not stretch its dominion over all actions, social as much as individual ones, of the human personality.

I have read and re-read the second part of your letter, but I dare not flatter myself that I have wholly grasped its shades of meaning.

To most of the considerations which you there put forward, I could willingly answer: Yes and no: yes, we are in agreement, in one sense; but in another sense, we are by no means so.

I have not demanded any specially favorable treatment for our ecclesiastics: but, remembering that the Hague convention (Art. 43) makes it the duty of the occupying power "to respect, unless absolutely unable to do so, the laws in force in the occupied country," I have put the freedom of preaching under the protection of the Belgian Constitution, and consequently I have also put it under the shelter of international law.

I do not confuse patriotism with incitement to revolt any more than you, Baron. With you I recognize that heated words do not, as a rule, leave the hearers unaffected, but the thing which matters is to know the object of such heated words, and what kind of sentiments they are likely to give birth to and to nourish in the hearts of the hearers.

To preach rebellion against necessary arrests, to drive suffering hearts to despair, or even simply to allow them to renounce all hope, is a bad thing. To warmly urge on them endurance, dignity, confidence, is a great thing.

Like all the moral virtues, patriotism keeps mid-way between excess and defect. To go beyond one's measure is an evil; to stop short of it is also an evil. The sole question to be defined is then to know at what moment encouragement to "devotion to one's country" runs to excess, becomes blameworthy and dangerous.

It is impossible to contain in one single formula all things appropriate to the coming time. Hence I have offered the Governor General my help in examining into these special cases where, according to him, the clergy have misused their ministry of the word. I seize the opportunity to thank you for having called my attention to sermons which are preached at the Grotto of Lourdes; I will not fail to enquire into this subject.

You fear, Baron, lest we should unduly enlarge the idea of a lawful patriotism, but are you not yourself inclined to restrict it unduly?

You seem practically to identify the ministry of the priesthood with public worship. But we hold that religion, and the sermons that extol it, ought to take in the whole life, and—consequently—ought to rule not only the direct dealings of the soul with God in the intimacy of the conscience or in the expression of solemn prayer, but also the whole of our moral conduct, in all its manifold manifestations, both private and public.

New circumstances give rise to new duties. The preacher of God's word would fail in his task if he did not understand that, in the tragic time in which we are, consciences cry out for light: must they accept the German occupation,

or merely submit to it? must they love or hate the occupier?

Has an invasion, unjust at the outset, become a lawful authority, and—if that be so—how are we to bring due respect for the occupier's orders into harmony with loyalty to our King? Which is it that comes first, the fact of occupation or the right? All these questions, and many others which are linked with them, cannot be stifled without danger. They have a moral, a religious, bearing. The clergy are thoroughly within their own province in setting themselves to solve these problems.

You remind me of something I said at a banquet, where the national Government and the Belgian Episcopate joined hands for the realizing of the motto of our Constitution: "Freedom for every one." No intrusion of the civil power into the domain of religion, no meddling by the religious authorities with political matters. To God the things which are God's, to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's.

Alas, times have changed! It would be bold, to say the least,—own this—to compare you to a national Government.

When the relations between the two authorities, secular and religious, have been restored to what they were in 1907, I shall be delighted to say once more: Let there be agreement between the two authorities on the basis of our constitutional liberties. To God the things which are God's, to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's.

I come thus to the main object of our correspondence: what is the nature of the occupying power, according to the principles of international right, as codified by the Hague Conventions? You, Baron, hold that that convention leaves some gaps, inasmuch as it does not lay down any duty for the occupied country. You seem not to have grasped that these gaps were left on purpose.

The law-makers of the Hague Convention had no intention of doing philosophical work; they acted and spoke as lawyers, as statesmen.

It is amusing enough—now own it—that you should reproach me—most good-naturedly so far as that goes—with having read the Hague Convention from the stand-

point of a "philosopher" strange to the realities of our earthly life; this reproach falls back straight down upon the acute diplomat who propounded it.

If the authors of the Hague Convention have not assigned to the occupied folk any duties with regard to the occupying power, is it not because they were obedient, on the whole, to the feeling that there could be no legal duties —the only ones which come into the question—without corresponding rights? An occupied country, not having any longer rights which it could oblige—by physical force—the occupier to respect, has likewise no duties towards the same.

This thought deserves to have light thrown on it, and I thank you for giving me the opportunity of studying for a moment this interesting problem with you.

The most approved speakers of the Hague Congress said definitely that their aim was, not to give "rights" to the occupying power and "duties" to the occupied, but to limit the authority of the occupying power. This is what M. Rolin, the authorized spokesman of the sub-commission No. 2 of the first Hague Conference (1899), said: "It has been formally laid down that none of the proposed articles can be held as entailing on behalf of those States which accept them the recognition of any right whatever which might clash with their respective sovereign rights, and that the acceptance of these laws implies solely, for each state, in that which concerns it, the acceptation of a group of legal rules limiting the outward acts of the *de facto* authority, which the fortunes of war may put into their hands with regard to any territory or to foreign subjects."

These conclusions of M. Rolin's report, which were accepted and unanimously voted for by the Hague Conference in a full sitting of July 5th, 1899, renewed the debates on principles which M. Bernaert had raised. Coming back to the Brussels proposal, M. Bernaert said: "According to the Brussels proposal, the conquered, the invaded, country recognizes beforehand the invader's rights over the former's territory. The invader will either preserve the existing laws, or will change them, and will apply them accord-

ingly. The officials of the invaded country are authorized to put themselves at the conqueror's service, if it suit them to do so. . . . *A like formal pledge* does not seem to me really admissible. . . . What I have just said holds good even for the great Powers. Could any man understand that, beforehand and in the case of war, the beaten side should confer rights on its own conqueror over its own land and thus provide its own ruin? . . .

"It does not seem to me that one can concede beforehand as a right something which necessarily belongs to the domain of 'fact' and might. And that will seem still more obvious when it applies to small countries which cannot—in the nature of things—be invaders, but are exposed to the risk of being invaded. Here there is not even that uncertainty, of those material risks, which I described just now. Belgium, as you know, is in a peculiar position. It is neutral; and the neutrality is guaranteed by the great Powers, and notably by our most powerful neighbors.

"Then we cannot be invaded; how then could the Belgian Government submit to the approval of our legislature a convention in which is anticipated that the big states would break their pledges to us and which sanctioned in advance deeds which could only be reckoned as an indisputable misuse of force? . . . In my opinion, we could only adopt such arrangements as, while admitting the actual fact, without recognizing any right on the conqueror's part, would bind the latter to exercise his power with moderation." (Hague C. 1899. 2d Sub-C.)

The authorized report of M. Rolin contains the answer of the Conference to M. Bernaert's speech. "No member of the Sub-Committee," we there read, "ever had, moreover, any idea that the legal authority of the invaded country might give a kind of sanction beforehand to the *de facto* power exercised by an army which invades or occupies a territory. But the adoption of exact rules, tending to limit the exercise of that power, did seem a still more evident necessity, conformable besides to the interests of all the nations which in turn the fortunes of war may betray." (Peace Conference, 1899.)

Thus appears in its proper light the first article of the Hague Convention, which governs the whole. "The contracting powers—Belgium as much as Germany—shall give instructions to their land forces in conformity with the regulations with regard to the laws and customs of land warfare annexed to this present Convention."

These declarations are an expression of the philosophy of right.

Every right is a moral power of holding, or of acting, but not every moral power is a right, in the full sense of that word.

"Right" adds to moral power, which latter implies the existence of a duty, the outward means of performing the duty required towards the one who has that right.

In other words, "right" is a moral power, the exercise of which "force" sanctions and guarantees.

International right regulates the legal relations of one nation to another.

In the normal course of national life each folk has, with regard to other nations, its own rights, which it means to insure respect for by every means in its power, even to, and including, the use of armed force. But when the normal course of international life is interrupted, when a nation is momentarily unable, through weakness, to enforce respect for its rights, what happens then?

Assuredly, its rights, so far as moral power goes, remain whole, sacred, morally inviolable, but the holder of those rights, for lack of effective means to enforce its rights and make itself sure they are respected, is at the mercy of the conqueror or of the pro-tem. oppressor.

It is this violent state of things with which the protectors of international law are dealing.

The Hague Convention comes to the help of the conquered or the oppressed, and says accordingly to the conqueror, i. e., to the occupying power: You have before you a folk unable for the moment to resist any misuse of force, to which you can possibly let yourselves go; moderate yourself, control yourself, do not misuse your power.

Should the folk of the occupied territory, exasperated

by an injustice against which they are defenseless, give way to a desperate impulse, you would be drawn into bloody acts of repression, without honor to yourselves or profit to the victims.

Be brave enough then to be just and humane.

The easier it is for you to misuse your strength, the more your self-respect bids you not to misuse it. The more the conquered are without means of defence, the more you owe it to yourself to respect their rights. Indeed, to attack a strong but guiltless adversary, to overcome his resistance, is an injustice. To knock that adversary down, to finish him off after having disarmed him, is monstrous.

A people subjected to an occupation is this disarmed adversary. Its rights, because deprived of their natural sanction, intrenched in the inviolable sanctuary of the conscience, are doubly worthy of respect. Firstly, because they remain "rights" in themselves, further, because they borrow from their outward helplessness a majesty to which every well-bred man cannot but bow.

Therefore the Hague Conference summons the occupying power to its bar to tell him: This folk, whose territory you occupy, cannot be ruled on a basis of natural rights and duties, which include the normal legal relations, as a whole, between nations, but you are not the less bound to respect their rights—morally inalienable—which we ourselves take under our protection. Should you happen to violate them, it is before our tribunal that you will have one day to give an account for your injustice. Hence we now put before you the charter of your duties.

Such a situation is plainly precarious. Wherefore the authors of the Hague Convention take care to emphasize the idea that the "occupier" has a *"de facto* power, an authority *de facto"* such as may "belong to a hostile army," and where, in the same art. 43, they say that "the authority of the lawful power has, as a matter of fact, passed into the occupier's hands," they immediately take the precaution of adding that the said power "must respect the laws in force in the occupied country, unless absolutely barred from so doing."

As month after month goes by, the occupying administration does not lose its provisional character.

Undoubtedly, the prolonged duration of occupation increases the number of administrative measures, and may enlarge their field, but the occupying power remains without "rights" over a folk which has no duty towards that power. It is lacking in moral and legal authority, that is in the moral right to demand from its temporary subjects a submission which wears the character of a duty, as viewed by the conscience and the law of nations.

Thus, as you will fully recognize, we cannot conceive a country having two governments over itself. If Belgium have the happiness of keeping its King, its Government and its army, we cannot conceive that it could have over it another legal authority than that of its own King and Government. In the social order, as in nature, a two-headed organism is a monstrosity.

But then, say you, you will thus create inevitable and inextricable complications. What will the occupied folk do when it finds itself faced with contradictory orders, coming respectively from its own government and from the occupying power?

What will it do? It will not hesitate between a power without authority and an authority without power. It is to the legitimate authority that its choice will turn. It will put "right" above "fact." "Fact" is not the same thing as "right."

A fact has happened, you say, proving that those who attribute to themselves a moral right of control over the acts of the occupying power have not been able to agree among themselves and so are likely to throw the people into disorder.

I do not know whether I thoroughly understand you, but this is the meaning which I believe your argument to bear. You say that the new military Belgian law does not "call up" young men dwelling in the occupied parts of Belgium; and from that you infer—it seems—that the Havre government approves your police-proceedings against such young men as have tried to join our army.

I do not possess the official text of this new Belgian law; I doubt whether you have allowed it to come into Belgium. But if the government at Havre abstains from again "calling up" the young men whom you keep here by force, it is not because they approve of your police-proceedings; it is quite simply that they submit to them.

The German military force has put so many obstacles in the way of our brave fellows that it has been practically impossible for them to perform their duty to their country. None the less, the Belgian Government always has in admiration—do not doubt that—as much as any of the patriots of the occupied territory—the volunteers who try to put themselves at their country's service, at the peril of their freedom and their life. But one can admire heroism without making a duty of it.

The people understand that and keep their conscience in peace.

You also think, Baron, that it is useless to appeal to a legitimate authority which has power to compare the "German Orders" with the Hague Convention. Practically, what you say is: the Belgian Courts remain open and keep this power. It would be interesting to get two exact statements on this subject: one of the *de facto* position, the other on the *de jure*.

The Belgian administration of justice remains still in action, you say. But has the occupying power always acknowledged its jurisdiction? Has it not, under circumstances on which I will not dwell, put something in its stead?

And the sentences of the Belgian courts—has the occupying power held them to be, by right, irreformable? If you answer Yes, I think with you that a second authority is superfluous in all judicial matters. But then, what hinders you from recognizing occupied Belgium's other sovereign prerogatives? If you feel bound to answer No, will not our claim for the sovereignty of the Belgian Fatherland (under shelter of international law) remain justified? I have let myself be drawn into developments beyond what I foresaw,

but if therein I have done wrong it is from yielding to a wish which your friendly letter seemed to suggest.

Accept, Baron, the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

Political Department, Governor General of Belgium,
I. 7889. *Brussels, September 15th,* 1916.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

Your Eminence was kind enough to give my letter of August 1st an exceedingly detailed answer. You defend your point of view with wonderful subtlety, as one might expect from a dialectician well versed in scientific controversy. Nevertheless, I should like to sum up the impressions made on me by your esteemed letter of August 16th in your words: "We agree in one sense; and in another we do not."

I will only speak of the "legitimacy of the occupation" in so far as your Eminence has brought forward a new argument. In the main, our points of view do not differ much from one another, for, as I have said before, we are dealing merely with the exercise of legislative power. This belongs to those in occupation, and one cannot encroach upon it.

According to the Hague Convention, those who occupy territory come into possession of this power by the establishment of an effective military occupation, and from that instant the inhabitants are subject to it. According to this international contract, the "fact" becomes a "right."

Your Eminence does not dispute the right of the occupier to exercise public authority, nor does the Belgian Government, inasmuch as since August 20th, 1914, it publishes all its orders in a formal manner for those who dwell in non-occupied territory. Disputes about the lawful exercise of authority must then rest solely and merely on the grounds of right established by the Hague Convention. In no case can the Power of Occupation tolerate or admit that the former government, as your Eminence would have it, retains a kind of suzerainty over the occupied territory.

I quite understand what your Eminence is aiming at

when you say explicitly that you wish to put the authority of the former government above that of those in occupation. Are you not thinking about objects which one can only expect to be realized after the occupation is over? I shall return to this later on. Meanwhile I intend to dwell on questions of right and their relation to occupation.

In your esteemed letter of August 16th last, your Eminence raises a new objection. You speak of the provisional character of occupation, and you thence deduce a lack of legal power.

I did not know that such an interpretation was allowable at law. A provisional measure resting on an ordinary contract has, while the contract lasts, the same legal validity as any permanent measure. The Hague Convention says nothing about the length of the occupation. So long as the condition necessary for its legality exists, i. e., the state of effective military occupation, this condition produces results which are quite legal.

The orders published by the Governor General will even hold good after the occupation, because they have been published by a lawful government. To lose their force, they must be repealed by a formal legislative act of its successor in the exercise of public authority.

It is enough to quote one example to show that the international condition of the occupied country has not changed during the occupation. Relatively to Germany, Belgium is a foreign country. It has its post, its budget, its customs. Belgian judges administer justice in the name of the king, and the inhabitants, in order to show their nationality, wear the Belgian national colors.

I have thus answered the exact question put to me by your Eminence. The exercise of sovereign rights in occupied territory belongs legitimately to the Governor General appointed by the occupying Power. The ancient holders of these rights are placed neither above nor below him. Within the confines of the occupied territory, they have lost all legislative power.

If there be any restrictions to the exercise of the occupant's rights, these are settled by the Hague Convention.

It is the peace treaty which will determine how the occupation is to end. In no wise does it depend for its legality on the causes of the war. The only condition preliminarily required to establish this legality is a state of effective military occupation.

In my letter of August 1st I spoke of important omissions in the Hague Convention. I mentioned especially the absence from it of any provision for participation by the people in the administrative organization of their country. Your Eminence answers by a reference to the deliberations of the Committees of the Conference that in this wise they aimed at the protection of the weak. I know it and I willingly admit as much. But my argument went further. I deplored the fact that, owing to the lack of directions as to the position of the population living in occupied territory, the same population were afraid to lend a hand in the work of administration, believing that by this co-operation they were compromising their political honor. These directions would have precluded the possibility of much useless uncertainty such as has been shown in Belgium among employees of the post office.

It is self-evident that in the course of this discussion we must never lose sight of the fact that not only is the Governor General invested with the Belgian public authority, but that his mission is also to protect Germany's interests and above all her military interests. Obviously, he cannot make use for this purpose either of the tribunals or the Belgian penal code. Your Eminence would not expect any Belgian judge to pass sentence upon one of your countrymen who had offended against German interests. For the same reason, the Belgian tribunals cannot act as judges in a court of final appeal, and thus be called upon to decide upon the legitimacy of German decrees.

I come now to a point mentioned above. If I may sum up the utterances of your Eminence during the time of occupation, I take it that the following is your point of view:

A Belgian patriot cannot bring himself to observe simply in their "objective judicial form the regulations imposed

by international conditions imposed on an occupied territory. Nor can he resign himself to wait patiently for the course of events although he can have no influence on the results of military operations. What he wants is, first, to hear words of comfort and hope, and secondly, to give full and effective vent to his feelings."

To reach this goal, your Eminence would like to give the clergy an important rôle.

To this I would answer first, by repeating what I have said before: that the clergy have never been hindered from ministering to the faithful the religious consolations of which they may stand in need at the present hour. Moreover, Belgians have never been forbidden to show their patriotism in a seemly manner, either inside or outside the church. To my mind, the best way of showing one's patriotism is to be reasonable and bow to the necessities brought about by a state of war, and during the occupation to take one's share loyally in the work of administration. Civilians —and that is the obvious meaning of the Hague Convention—must not take part in military operations. It follows that the administration of a country ought to be looked upon from a purely objective point of view and that every step taken by the occupying Power should not be considered as proceeding from a hostile intention. One often hears words like this in the mouths of intelligent Belgians: "This Order is a good one, but we cannot acknowledge this in public for we do not want to be looked upon as lacking in patriotism."

From this standpoint, publications injurious to the Power in occupation and exaggerated outbursts of patriotism are doing a great deal of harm. They are hindering the people from regaining their composure. There is only one explanation. Some far-off political goal is being aimed at which has nothing to do with the calm which ought to reign during the occupation and which is even incompatible therewith. One is tempted to infer that the entertaining of hostile feelings either secret or public against the occupying Power is used as a means for reaching this goal.

I will not say anything about the political activities mani-

fested by priests engaged in preaching so as not to repeat anything I have said before. In my last letter I took the liberty to remind your Eminence that you yourself in quoting the words of Christ had renounced all meddling with politics. Your Eminence answers that this was good enough for times of peace but not for the time of war. Without wishing to criticize the facts, I should like, however, to be allowed to refer to your Eminence's pastoral activities before the war. On going through the collection of your pastoral letters, I have more than once come across utterances which belong beyond all doubt to the political realm. I find it hard to remove the impression that your Eminence's study of St. Thomas Aquinas furnished you with reasons for justifying on theological and philosophical grounds the intrusion of politics into your episcopal ministry and at the same time for defending yourself against any exception which may be taken against your line of conduct. But again I beg your Eminence not to look upon any remarks of mine as criticism, for I want to confine myself to reviewing your behavior during the occupation. Under present circumstances, I think that liberty of worship essentially implies a duty on the part of the clergy to waive all claim to meddle in politics. The decrees of the occupying Power would be of no avail if there were places where they had no force whatever and where they could be broken with impunity. On sundry occasions our attention has been called to the fact that, by allowing during the occupation a certain amount of political activity in the churches, we were favoring the Catholic party. For this party can make use of the churches in order to perform certain acts that redound to their own advantage, while other parties, being unable to hold meetings, are forced to remain inactive.

I come to your Eminence's philosophical disquisitions. Allow me to repeat once more that I do not take up this discussion as a professional philosopher of great repute such as your Eminence is. I am a practical man. That is why I give my attention less to philosophical abstractions than I do to the stern realities of life and men in general. When I call your Eminence a professional philosopher, I do not

at all mean to say that your Eminence is a "stranger to the world." I only mean that you have a tendency to look at everything through a philosopher's spectacles.

As regards Kant, it never entered my head to attack him. In my last letter I merely observed without touching any question of fact that even if Kant's theories were as dangerous as your Eminence makes out, we ought first of all to find out whether they have really filtered their way into the minds of the German people.

I now come to the fact; I must be brief.

Your Eminence leaves altogether out of count the positive moral teachings of Kant. I do not believe that from the Catholic standpoint you can have any objections to raise against any of the principles themselves contained therein, no matter how much you lament that this morality is independent of the faith. If Kant, while adopting the separation, alleged to be dangerous, of morality and right, was not prevented in spite of this from teaching a lofty ideal morality, why should his followers forget this teaching and fall into a brutal subjectivism? I cannot see the necessity of this; and I hold the morality taught by Kant to be a powerful bulwark for protecting the sense of right.

I should like to recall in a few words my argument of August 1st. Your Eminence, a few years before the war, did not question the existence in Protestant Germany of a deep religious feeling. At Aix-la-Chapelle you loaded the German Catholics with praises. Can this truly religious spirit have suddenly disappeared from our people? Yet the evil influence of Kant ought to have made itself felt long ago.

Your Eminence connects the teachings of Kant, Hegel and Nietzsche with the behavior of Germany and her chiefs at the time of the declaration of war. You must then of necessity explain the coming of England on the scene in favor of Belgium by the utilitarian philosophy represented by the English school. I think that it is precisely on account of its idealistic tendencies that German philosophy is so ill suited for application to the ends of real practical life. There is no other philosophy which aims so earnestly at

freeing its teaching from all conditions and therefore to attain pure knowledge such as is independent of every practical purpose. For this reason it has often been blamed for losing itself in the clouds.

In the course of your arguments, your Eminence touches also on what is called "militarism." Assuredly, there is something of Kant's categorical imperative in the spirit of severe discipline reigning in our army. But in Germany we have always held that a good army, ready for war, was a guarantee of the people's prosperity. At times of political conflict, when the military situation was much better for us than in August, 1914, the knowledge that we had a strong army did not hinder us from pursuing a peaceful policy. Did not your Eminence yourself clamor for a strong army for Belgium, and on this occasion did you not quiet the minds of soldiers' parents about the alleged dangers of barrack life?

I do not think myself qualified to talk about the behavior of Germany at the moment when war was declared; but for my own personal edification I should like to address your Eminence the following question: "Cannot this way of acting be defended, according to St. Thomas Aquinas, by the right of legitimate self-defence?" I am not an expert in Thomistic philosophy. The idea crosses my mind because your Eminence in your last address at St. Gudule, while treating of another topic, refers to this "vindicatio." (I would, by the way, call your Eminence's attention to the fact that the press uses the word "vindicta" instead of "vindicatio" in reporting your Eminence's speech.) If your Eminence would let the philosophy of St. Thomas alone and believe that Germany has acted in legitimate self-defence, then we thoroughly understand each other.

My letter has unfortunately been drawn out to some length. But I could not let the occasion pass of expressing as well as I could my objections to your Eminence's remarks.

I offer your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem and I have the honor to be your devoted servant.

(Signed) LANCKEN.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
September 25th, 1916.

To Baron von der Lancken, Head of the Political Department of the Governor General, Brussels.

Dear Baron—I have taken advantage of my first free hours to read attentively the considerations you unfold in your honored letter of September 15th (No. 7889), and I rise from that perusal with the impression that you do not look for an answer from me. I think that the estimates and the conclusions come to in my letter of August 16th stand practically established, and I believe that I am not going beyond your own opinion when I take your silence on this subject as a sign of acquiescence. Still the new points which you put forward show some misconceptions or keep up some complaints of yours which seem to call still for a short explanation.

I will go through your letter step by step, and will endeavor, as I go along, to deal with the points about which our views differ.

1. To put the Occupying Power in the right, you say that the Hague Convention "has turned a 'fact' into a 'right.'"

No human authority has power to do that. When an occupation is unjust, it remains so, despite all conventions. The supreme resource of the oppressed is the power of proclaiming that a "fact" does not establish a "right." Nevertheless the "occupation," even without "right" or contrary to right, is a "fact" to which the folk of the "occupied" country have to submit themselves. The rule of the occupiers is a fact; the regulations put forth by them are facts. None the less these facts do not make a right. And that is why the following question arises. Do the regulations put forth by the authors of an "occupation" which is without right or dead against right call for submission from the citizens of the occupied country? Do they allow of it? For, in short, it seems that in the face of injustice and its consequences the sole attitude allowed and bidden is that of revolt.

There is the question of principle—question of morality

and of right—which is raised by the issue of regulations by a Power lacking from the outset in moral and judicial authority.

I have given an answer to this question as far back as my first Pastoral of Xmas, 1914: No, in and by themselves these regulations do not bind the conscience. Looked at wholly in themselves, they even call for non-submission. But, between two evils, we must choose the lesser. To avoid worse wrongs than those of being ruled by the occupying power, it is allowable to submit to certain regulations which in themselves have little force. It is morally decent to conform to them. The citizens of the occupied country have grounds for supposing that the sole sovereign authority they recognize approves of their peaceful behavior, reasonably and within the limits I have just laid down. Failing this submission, it is true that the occupying power is destitute of the prerogatives of sovereignty. Hence the Hague Convention imposes on them an obligation to administer the occupied country according to the laws of that country. If they violate these laws they add a further injustice to their original one.

2. You are astonished at my speaking of "the provisional nature of the occupation," and you credit me with deducing from that provisional nature the unlawfulness of the "occupation" itself. Further, in developing your argument, you make me speak as if I had held the two expressions "provisional" and "for a short time" meaning the same thing.

Be kind enough to read my words again. You will then see that I have written exactly: "Though month after month goes by, the occupation does not lose its 'provisional' character. However long the occupation may last, the occupying Power remains without rights over a folk which has no duties towards the occupier."

"Provisional" means something which happens while one waits for something else. A provisional government is one which is got up during a revolution, or during a war, whilst awaiting the establishing of a constitution or the return of the settled government. It is not because it lasts

only for a short time that the provisional government is "unlawful;" it is because it presents itself to the occupied country with no credentials. It is a "Power" without title-deeds. Its existence remains precarious, however long it may last. Its regulations have only a borrowed validity.

You tell me that the régime of occupation will end only when the military occupation ends, and that power will not pass into the hands of another Government until after Peace is concluded: alas! I know that, but, once again, that is only how things stand, and the "ipso facto" is not, and does not create, "right."

3. I gladly own with you that the Hague Conference will have some criticisms to make on the way the occupied countries were "administered," notably on the functions and the lot of those in the administration staff.

4. I was expecting your answer: "The General Government cannot concede the right of giving final decisions to the Belgian judges."

But, if so, accept our conclusion as well: i. e., that we cannot say we are satisfied, when, teaching our appeal to a moral authority which confronts the German decrees with the articles of the Hague Convention, you say to us, "But this appeal is useless; have you not the Belgian courts of justice always in operation?"

5. Your respected letter then passes back to the way of thinking about and upholding patriotism under "occupation" conditions, and specially as to the part played by the clergy and by myself in this respect.

A little while ago we were discussing the nature of the occupying Power. Against the claims of "right" you brought forward the "fact." To the title of that authority you opposed the Power in "actual practice." In turn I set "right" against "the fact," theory against practice.

You outlined to us a delightful form of occupation, a "paternal" government which had at heart, above all, the general interests of the occupied country, and you asked me if the wisest and at the same time the most useful attitude on our part would not be to co-operate with this régime of occupation, while keeping ourselves free to cherish in our in-

most hearts distant hopes of a still better future. It would be painful to me, Baron, to answer your most pleasant letter by a judicial demand. That would be, besides, quite needless. But can you forget the conditions under which the invasion of Belgium took place? The calumnies, the vexatious proceedings, fines, imprisonments, tortures, deportations, death sentences, bloody executions, requisition in money and in kind, the refusals to do justice, which our hapless country (the Catholic clergy first and foremost) has had to undergo during these two long years of the "occupation"? Do not the latest acts of compulsion date from yesterday?

We have protested sometimes against these proceedings, we have—to the best of our power—kept our folk quiet by instilling into their hearts an unshakable trust in the Almighty and in the strength of our allies; but not even to protect ourselves have we resorted to direct reprisals, nor to incitements to active resistance.

The fact that—in what relates to me personally—my teaching has been (as you aver) a reproduction of the theology and the philosophy of a Doctor of the 13th century, St. Thomas Aquinas,—does not this fact afford a palpable proof that (far from sacrificing principle to a passing phase of politics) I remained the humble and faithful servant of eternal and impersonal truth?

Even the words which you remember, "To God the things of God, to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's," I am ready to say them again, in time of war as in time of peace. But in order to make them applicable to the delimitation of the two authorities, religious and civil, it should be understood that these two authorities are in lawful opposition to each other.

6. The letter of August 16th expressed my view on the dangers to the unity and firmness of the conscience brought about by those manifold water-tight partitions which Kant puts between metaphysics and science, between knowledge and "will," between morality and "right." I need not go back to that worn-out subject.

Does it follow from this that I deem the German nation to be without religion or morals, and that hence I must disown the homage I have lately paid to that nation? By no means.

The correspondence in which I denounce the infiltrations of "Kantian" ideas into the minds of the German Empire bears witness still to my admiration for "that great and fine folk," which took part without protest in the violation of Belgian neutrality; and since doing so, strives by the most wretched expedients of casuistry at bay to justify the perjury.

The spectacle of this general throwing-over of right and truth baffles me. I seek a benevolent explanation of it in the intellectual environment of the nation. If you can find as charitable and more plausible a solution to the enigma, then, Baron, give it to me.

You raise the objection, it is true, that logically I ought to attribute the intervention of England on behalf of Belgium to the English "utilitarian" philosophy, just as I make the German philosophy responsible for the invasion of our country. It is not my place, Baron, to look closely into other people's intentions. I stick to the facts: Germany has done us harm, to assure her own welfare. England did herself harm to do us good. Germany attacked us when she was ready. England did not wait for that before defending us.

Among the English folk natural uprightness triumphed over the localized surface influence of a school of thought. Among the German folk the age-long, widespread, deep influence of Kant and his disciples has warped public feeling, and an inflaming of the sentiment of national strength consumed the barriers of righteousness in an hour of crisis.

7. Rightly or wrongly, it is to this inflamed sentiment that I attribute the origin of Prussian militarism.

St. Thomas, into whose teachings you bid me search, holds that justice, which orders respect to be paid to public right, is the highest of all the natural virtues, because it makes us put our private interests below the interest of the community. Armed force is, in civilized life, the necessary

helper of "right." The army, when used in the service of "right," is eminently worthy of every one's respect, esteem and gratitude.

Pacifism, which means the suppression of armies and arms, and the extolling of peace at any price, peace for the sake of peace, peace come-what-may, would doom us to a like disregard, to a like surrender of right and the violation of right, of justice and injustice. It would be at the same time both a social mistake and an act of cowardice.

But militarism, which wishes the army to exist for itself, and does not subordinate it to the safeguarding and defence of right, of order and of peace; which hails the letting loose of military force as glorious manifestation of national power, bearing in itself its own justification,—this kind of militarism is another social aberration which identifies honor with pride.

You say that "Notwehr"—the need of defending oneself, if I rightly understand you—justifies the declaration of war by the German Empire.

Assuredly, "Notwehr" does not justify the invasion of Belgium. This invasion, from our point of view, was and will ever remain an injustice; from the point of view of the (German) Empire, the breach of an oath.

Germany's existence was not threatened, nor were its rights attacked. "Notwehr," the need of defending oneself, of which it seeks to take advantage, has, so it seems to me, but one intelligible meaning, namely, that it thought the time was favorable for asserting its superiority, for the exaltation of its natural strength. "Notwehr" thus understood is a corollary of Militarism.

Once again I have let myself be drawn into a lengthy discussion which has gone beyond my reckoning. I have not succeeded in stating clearly my ideas with greater conciseness.

Accept, Baron, the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

Political Department of the Governor General,
I. 9181. *Brussels, October 6th,* 1916.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

Your Eminence—In replying to your Eminence's esteemed letter of September 25th, I feel I must deal, and point by point, with the questions therein raised. I am obliged to take this course as I should be loth to approve by my silence certain views of yours.

The first question is that of the legality of the occupation, a point which you again call into question not only against my opinion, but also against that of the Hague Conference. To my way of thinking your Eminence does not sufficiently take into account that herein is a question of international contract drawn up in accordance with ordinary regulations and freely agreed to by the contracting parties. This contract within certain fixed limits establishes a fully defined Right. The judicial obligation is linked with a *de facto* state of things: it disappears when this comes to an end. However this may be, I would refer your Eminence to the members of the Conference themselves, when you expressly refuse to accord to the contract concluded by them the character of a work of right—une œuvre de droit, because, as you say, no human power can change a "fact" into a "right." Moreover, there is another altogether essential point which we should not lose sight of in our discussion—it is that the Hague Convention treats of the Right of War. It regulates the way in which War should be carried on. In a particular manner, the arrangements it lays down on the subject of occupation are destined to create in the occupied territory a state of order which will allow the civil population to follow their ordinary manner of life to the end of the War.

The lawfulness of the occupation, within the bounds fixed by law, cannot depend, as I said before, on the causes of the War. The question whether we should take any account of these and confront them with the result of the discussion—I am speaking in quite a general way—is a matter reserved for peace negotiations. Because the population of occupied territory have certain natural aspirations, or

have certain ends in view, that is no reason for raising doubts about the legality of the occupation itself.

Your Eminence must allow me to observe, that you explicitly admit I am right when you say: "The occupation even whether outside the law or contrary to it is a *fact* to which the dwellers in occupied territory have to submit. It is obvious that bounds have been set by the Hague Conference to the exercise of legal authority by the occupying power. In cases unforeseen by the Hague Conference the occupier, relying on his own sense of justice, imposes certain restrictions on the exercise of his power, having at the same time regard for the aspirations of the people. He only asks the inhabitants of the occupied territory to accept with docility and sweet reasonableness the steps taken by him in his capacity of trustee of the legal power in the country undergoing occupation."

I agree with your Eminence's definition of the word provisional. "Provisional means what one does while waiting for something else." Indeed, the occupation will come to an end in one way or another, and will be replaced by some other juridical state.

As regards the competency of Belgian tribunals, I would only remark that in no case must we confuse juridical with legal power.

I would also like to touch briefly on national demonstrations during the occupation. Your Eminence avers that you are doing your best to keep the people quiet by upholding their patriotic spirit. But in addressing the public probably nothing is harder than to harmonize one's intentions with the actual effect one produces. One of the most brilliant speakers in the French Parliament, one of the leaders of the Catholic party, told me once, that when he made one of his sensational speeches he was oftener than not misunderstood by the very members of his party. As I have said already the main issue in the present case is not merely to keep before our eyes the maintenance of public order, the disturbance of which would entail needless sacrifices, but also what attitude the people are led to adopt in regard to

the essentially pacific administrative work of the occupying power.

Just one word about Kant. I know well enough what your Eminence was aiming at the very first time you mentioned Kant's philosophy. But your attempt to give it a favorable interpretation was not a sufficient motive for me to say that I appreciated it, when, in fact, I did not share your opinion. Regarding my remarks about the "notwehr" it seems to me that your Eminence has not quite grasped the meaning which I gave that word. "Notwehr" connotes "the act of defending oneself in the case of necessity." In that case many things are allowed which are forbidden in normal times. The idea of necessity is not unknown in Theology, as in the case of urgent baptism. It allows the deviation from rules laid down for ordinary baptisms. If your Eminence will review in this light the events which occurred in Germany at the end of July, 1914, you will be satisfied that very little could be laid at the door of Kant.

A young German philosopher, with whom I was conversing lately, spoke highly of the wonderful fairness and clearness with which your Eminence, in your work, "The sources of contemporary philosophy," lays bare and critically examines the doctrines of your adversaries. If you would apply the same calm and unruffled method in reviewing the events which occurred at the outset of the war, you would probably no longer defend the ideas expressed in your letter of September 25th. I do not believe I can convince your Eminence by a mere unpretentious letter. I would, however, call your attention to the following facts: Your Eminence asserts that there was no "notwehr" in the case of Germany, because her existence was not threatened. I answer that her existence was seriously threatened from the moment the Russians mobilized. For, in examining this question, a decisive factor is to be found in the conditions of modern warfare, rather than in some diplomatic scheme evolved at the eleventh hour, the sole purpose of which is to gain time. If we keep before our eyes the huge number of men bearing arms, the difficulties of setting these enormous masses of men in motion, also the extreme importance,

from the point of view of the military advantage to be gained by the saving of a single day, mobilization is tantamount to war. By this hasty mobilization the Russians necessarily brought into play a system of alliances which for ten years had been directed against us. That the annihilation of Germany was contemplated must often enough have been apparent to your Eminence from the speeches of Entente statesmen.

We must also bear in mind that a military offensive can very well be the beginning of a defensive war, just as on the other hand, an aggressive war may begin with operations of a purely defensive character, in all which, geographical conditions, fortifications, etc., . . . are very important factors to be reckoned with. We must also take into account the interests which the several combatants have in carrying the war into enemy territory.

If we examine the remote causes of the War, the pretext upon which England has justified her entry into the arena vanishes into thin air. I am avowedly opposed to rash generalizations. True, I admit that many Englishmen have a deeply rooted sense of righteousness. But England as a State has always acted in her own interests without the least scruple. So staunch a friend of England's as Georges Clémenceau has reproached her with this tendency throughout the course of the war. If your Eminence follows attentively the drama of which Greece is the theater, you will no longer be able to boast of the British Government's righteousness. You will arrive at the same conclusion if you go back in mind to the scandalous overthrow of the Boer republic. Now, as then, the English people follow in the wake of their government with enthusiasm. Without raising a single protest, not only did they allow a small people to be dragged into the war, but also compelled it to wage, in the capacity of an ally, a war against its own interests. I am aware that all kinds of subterfuges are being resorted to in order to prove that Greece is acting of her own free will; this only makes England's attitude more reprehensible than ever. It is quite certain that there is no case for "notwehr" here.

I would not like to end this letter, although it is already

long enough, without touching upon the question of the so-called "militarism." I am quite willing to concede to your Eminence that your ideas are founded on the doctrine of the great mediæval philosopher. But precisely on account of the depth of that doctrine, I am astonished to see your Eminence attribute the most formidable war in the history of the world to external and, so to say, accidental causes. Germany, which economically was on the eve of the most prodigious development, had everything to gain by the maintenance of peace. The true cause of the war was England's traditional hostility to every rival she encountered in the world's market or who threatened her sovereignty of the seas. The position of the German army in 1914 was less favorable than before, for the steps taken to strengthen it in face of the recent increases in the Russian and French armies had not yet had time to bear fruit. Moreover, it is only a central power that feels the need of completing her military preparations: in fact, she has always to count on the possibility of having war on two fronts, and she must seek to compensate by the rapidity of her operations the numerical and strategical superiority of her foes. England never felt the necessity of warlike preparations; she has lived by herself in her own island and had allies on the continent always ready. Yet she kept her fleet which forms her most important arm always ready for battle; she often showed this by trial mobilizations or naval reviews which were like threats directed against possible enemies. England is, besides, interested in a protracted war between continental powers. A hundred years ago, when Europe was engaged in its struggle against France, she quietly built up her colonial empire.

To-day the blockade which excludes Germany from commercial rivalry secures for England enormous advantages, for during this time she sells coal, munitions and arms to her allies at prices never reached before. There we have an example of what it is to use, with as little hesitation as scruple, one's material pre-eminence. German militarism, such as your Eminence conceives it, namely as a product of the sentiment of force, has no existence, because our army is the

best school where the strict sentiment of duty and the spirit which subordinates particular to general interests is able to develop.

I take this opportunity to forward herewith a letter which has reached me through the official agency of a neutral state. I hope shortly to answer your Eminence's letter of the 5th instant.

I offer to your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem, and I have the honor to be,

Yours devotedly,

(Signed) LANCKEN.

Archbishop's House, Louvain,
October 10th, 1916.

To Baron von der Lancken, Chief of the Political Department, Governor General, Brussels.

Baron—Your esteemed letter I. 9181 dated October 6th has just reached me and I hasten to answer it by return of post. It seems to me indeed that I have only to acknowledge the receipt of it.

The distinction between fact and right in a régime of occupation; the original flaw of the occupation, which by the avowal of the occupant, as well as according to the opinion of the occupied, violates the right of nations; the respect due to patriotic sentiments; the theory of right distinguished from the morality and influence on German thought of the philosophy of Kant; the German conception of militarism: these various topics, which have formed the subject of our previous correspondence, appear to be exhausted.

Regarding the occupation, I should like nevertheless to add one word. You enunciate the theory that we must consider the occupation in itself independently of the conditions under which it was brought about. But what would you say if it occurred to a man to come and install himself in your house under the pretext that he had a quarrel with his neighbors, and if in answer to your protests he contented himself with saying, "I am now in occupation. Here I am and here I stay"?

Your correspondence touches on a fresh topic, or rather it puts forward fresh developments, an idea which entered only incidentally into our discussion. Regarding the "not-wehr," which may have caused the declaration of war, you examine to-day the general situation of Europe with the view, in Germany's name, of reaching this conclusion: "I attack but it is only to defend myself." This is a vast subject, and to treat it correctly it would be needful to review the series of events which immediately preceded the war, to examine the books of different colors published by the Governments of the belligerent nations—the Germano-Austrian correspondence is unfortunately missing from the collection—it would be necessary, in order to follow you step by step, to explore the history of English policy and the trend of its diplomacy up to the present hour. So wide a discussion has no chance of finality. Moreover, my means of information and reference are to-day too scanty to allow me to engage with prudence in such delicate questions.

To the names mentioned in my letter of the 5th instant * I take the liberty to add those of two "aumoniers du travail" who now for several months have been detained in Germany, M. Houet, prisoner at Anrath, and M. Lesire, prisoner at Munster in Westphalia.

Receive, Baron, the assurance of my sincere esteem.

D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

Political Department of the Governor General of Belgium, S. No. I. 9632. *Brussels, October 14th,* 1916.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your Eminence's esteemed letter of the 10th instant. I am also of opinion that our exchange of views regarding the right of occupation and the questions bearing on it has been exhausted: all further discussion would be superfluous. I do not wish to revert to it save to reply to the last remark made by your Eminence.

Your Eminence compares the occupation of a country to

* In a letter addressed to Baron von der Lancken and dated October 5th the Cardinal interceded in favor of several persons convicted.

the violation of a particular abode. I think this comparison is far from solving the question in discussion. In the case which concerns us, we should not try to seek arguments in lame comparisons when all the elements for the solution may be found in the question itself. A man thrusts himself into another man's house with the plea that he has a quarrel with his neighbor: that has nothing in common with legitimate defence (notwehr). Besides, I only spoke of the general political situation and the conditions of modern warfare because it was essential to do so to explain Germany's legitimate defence.

I avail myself of this opportunity to inform you that Viaene, Director of the Brothers' school at Malines, has obtained from the Governor General the remission of the rest of his sentence and will shortly be set at liberty. Nevertheless I must ask of your Eminence to be good enough to give me some assurance that Viaene will not for the future commit fresh infringements of orders issued by the occupying power.

I have also the pleasure to acquaint your Eminence that Mademoiselle Marie Vergote, in whom your Eminence is interested, will soon be brought back from Germany and allowed to visit her mother in her own home.

(Signed) LANCKEN.

CHAPTER XXVIII

FRESH ARRESTS OF PRIESTS

AGAIN and again the Cardinal had complained to the Governor General of the harsh measures taken against the clergy by the occupying power. He had made it clear that besides many other drawbacks that had resulted from the arrest of priests and religious the exercise of divine worship and the maintenance of classes in the colleges had been seriously interfered with. The only remedy that Baron von Bissing could find to meet this inconvenience was to order that for the future each bishop should be notified as early as possible of the repressive measures taken against any of the priests of his diocese. But this decision was carried into effect only during the months of August and September, 1916.

Brussels, August 8th, 1916.

Political Department of the Government General of Belgium.

In the organization of divine worship, with a view to prevent disturbances arising from breaches of order by priests and the penalties inevitably resulting from them, the Governor General has decided to bring each case as early as possible to the cognizance of their lordships the bishops. Agreeably to this decision I have the honor to inform your Eminence of the following cases:

An inquiry has been set on foot against Canon Alfred Kips, director of St. Mary's Institute at Brussels, for having retained and propagated forbidden publications. The Abbe Bernaerts, parish priest of St. Charles's at Antwerp, has likewise been arrested for breaking the regulations of the censorship. Brother Viaene, of Malines, also has been

put under arrest. He is found to have taken a part in clandestine correspondence.

I offer to your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem, ad interim.

(Signed) GRAF. HARRACK.

P. S.—The Rev. Daumont, an assistant priest of Brussels, has been sentenced for various misdemeanors to one year and six months' imprisonment.

Brussels, August 16th, 1916.

Political Department of the Government General of Belgium.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

In accordance with the Governor General's decision, which has already been made known to your Eminence, I have the honor to make the following communication:

Dean Cooreman, of Overyssche, induced the parish priests Van den Eynde, of Neeryssche, Covens, of Loombeck, and the Curate Busseen, of Huldenberg, to hold the Corpus Christi procession without the sanction of the military authorities. The Curate Michiels, of Neeryssche, lent assistance during the procession. On these different ecclesiastics fines have been inflicted.

I offer to your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem. Per interim.

(Signed) GRAF. HARRACK.

Brussels, August 24th, 1916.
1 *Rue Lambemont.*

Political Department of the Government General of Belgium.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

Putting into execution the decision come to by the Governor General, I have the honor to make the following announcement to your Eminence: F. Schmitz, S. J., of Louvain, has been arrested for assisting Belgians of military age to cross the frontier. An inquiry has been set on foot

regarding the priests Van Linden and Peter Duwez, of St. Mary's Institute, at Brussels, for having evaded the orders of the censorship.

I take advantage of this opportunity to acknowledge with thanks the receipt of your Eminence's letter of August 16th.

I have read it with interest and I shall do myself the pleasure of replying to it in detail.

I present to your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) LANCKEN.

Brussels, September 11th, 1916.

Political Department of the Government General of Belgium.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

Pursuant to the orders of the Governor General, I have the honor of informing your Eminence that the parish priest Swalus of Laeken has been condemned to a year and two months' imprisonment and in addition to a fine of 200 marks. He will undergo his imprisonment in Germany.

The Curate Pittoors, of Kessel-Loo, has been arrested for plying the trade of a spy.

I offer to your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem. Yours devotedly,

(Signed) LANCKEN.

Archbishop's House, Malines, September 15th, 1916.

To the Baron von der Lancken, Head of the Political Department of the General Government, Brussels.

Dear Baron—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 24th of August, but which, owing to circumstances outside my control or yours, was only delivered to me on the 6th of September. There you tell me that Father Schmitz has been arrested, and that proceedings

are being taken against two professors of St. Mary's Institute: Mr. Van Linden and Mr. Duwez.

Some days ago I learned that M. Le Cure Bernaerts, of Antwerp, had been condemned to a year's imprisonment and sent away into Germany. He was guilty of keeping in his possession his own bishop's pastorals, and of having had a list drawn up of those of his parishioners who were in the army.

Canon Kips, director of St. Mary's Institute, at Schaerbeek (Brussels), has just been sentenced to three months' imprisonment and a fine for having been found in possession of two patriotic songs and two of his bishop's pastorals.

If I were to make use of the words "to punish severely" with regard to these vexatious measures, which for two years have been inflicted on our beloved and noble clergy (blow after blow), you would cry out in protest, my dear Baron. In your inmost heart, however, you may well think that I am speaking euphemistically. For, after all, I take it that only soldiers by profession, whose horizon does not extend beyond the barrack walls, suppose that momentary success justifies the misuse of force; but that men put in charge of the civil administration of an unjustly occupied country, that professional diplomats can approve of proceedings at once useless and vexatious, that passes my understanding. Unhappily, whether you submit to the orders of the military or whether you make your own, the outcome is the same for our poor country and our splendid clergy. It is and will remain the same for the great fame of the German empire. When the victims are able to speak freely, it will not be those who sat in judgment on them who will cut a good figure at the bar of impartial history.

Do you wish for another specimen of which you seem not to be aware of German justice?

Two pupils of the Malines Grand Seminaire—MM. Willems and Malve—are among the ecclesiastical criminals of recent date.

Mr. Willems has been in prison for six weeks, no one knows why. I presume that he is suspected of having sent

a letter of encouragement to his brother at the front. And the "preventive detention" still goes on. I say nothing as to the hateful kind of questioning which he and one of his companions, the Rev. Mr. Soille, had to undergo. Their case has become known to every one.

It is on this case of Mr. Malve that I wish to fix your attention for a moment, especially as you are not, I understand, altogether unacquainted with it.

The young cleric, Mr. Malve, in a private room of a private house—the seminary, to wit, was enjoying his play-time with two of his fellow students. He had sung sundry tunes, some religious, some secular ones. It came into his head to strike up the "Marseillaise," without thinking that outside in the street a German was listening. The next day the police thrust their way into the seminary and threatened all there with a penalty—always the same respect for The Hague convention!—if the author of the mischief did not make himself known.

The generous-minded student, not personally known to me—I am anxious to emphasize that fact—hurried before his judges, anxious above all to shelter his fellow students.

A man of good sense, I do not say one of warm heart, would have pardoned him, would he not? or else have congratulated the brave young man on his act?

By no means. Mr. Malve was condemned to three months' imprisonment. More than that, the rector of the seminary, deemed answerable for a bit of fun of which he could not have been aware, was also condemned to a fine of 300 marks.

Nor is this all. After a whole month's detention your political department makes it known to the heads of the seminary that if a petition for pardon is presented Mr. Malve would be set free. The petition was duly drawn up. It was put into your own hands, Baron. You received it. But at that moment it seemed to you that German justice could only stoop to mercy after fresh inquiries and new reports, which amounts in plain words to waiting until the prisoner had undergone his full sentence.

In face of facts so edifying—and there are plenty of

others we could cite—one hardly knows whether to be angry or to smile when a good man writes in the "Monthly Correspondence," published by the committee for the defense of German and Catholic interests (much more German than Catholic) during the war (issue of July, 1916, P. 82) that the Belgian clergy ought in justice to appreciate "the frank benevolence of the foreign holders of power" (in Belgium).

It is true that the esteemed Mr. Krebs, professor at Friburg in Breisgau—for it is to him that this matter relates—asserts that he keeps himself "au courant" of the newspapers and has made a journey through Belgium to study things there.

He does not like inquiries in which the voices of opposing sides are given. He deems it surer to hold them by himself alone.

But how is it that this good gentleman does not feel how . . . well, unchivalrous it is to attack under the protection of German bayonets a body of clergy which he knows to be gagged?

When your newspapers bounded on my letter, "On My Return from Rome," as if on some prey, and put into my mouth a prayer that an epidemic might break out among your troops, I asked his Excellency the Governor General if he would loyally transmit to my German and Austrian brethren in the Catholic episcopate a letter, in which I showed that my accusers make me talk nonsense. It will be enough for you to read page 5 of the accompanying document * to become quite aware yourself that this is really so. The context of my pastoral shuts out any logical possibility of this hateful interpretation.

The Governor General refused to agree to my request, alleging that my pastoral had been published in Germany, and that those who read it were in a position to make correction, which I urged, for themselves.

But my pastoral had not been published in Germany. I

* With this letter, addressed to Baron von der Lancken, was also sent a copy of my letter of August 24, which his Excellency Baron von Bissing had refused to forward to the German bishops.

should be very anxious to learn in what paper, in what magazine, its authorized text has been given. Thus calumny runs its course.

An article, the source of which is not known to you, in the "Frankfurter Zeitung," of Monday, August 7th, has picked it up and set it again in circulation.

Is it too much to ask you, Baron, to deny this untruth or to obtain for me the means of denying it?

Perhaps, therefore, you will consent to inform the "Monthly Catholic Correspondence" more accurately upon "the frank benevolence of the foreign holders of power (in Belgium)."

The foreign holders of power solemnly bound themselves, by the Governor General's circular dated April 22d, to make requisitions upon me "in kind." And our provinces here paid forty millions as the price of this undertaking. But the monopolizing of vegetables, potatoes, flour, eggs and butter, the requisitioning of horses go on as cruelly as ever. Is this freedom? Is this benevolence?

The foreign holders of power, who have already extorted forty million (francs) a month * soon to amount to a thousand million (francs), are at this moment forcing the doors of the National Bank and despoiling us of six hundred and twenty-five million marks, which are on their way through the channel of the German banks, to swell the German Imperial Loan, i. e., to furnish our enemies with munitions of war to be used against us.† Is this freedom? Is this benevolence?

These deeds of violence, whether they originate in the "military justice" or in the "political administration," repress patriotism also in stifling its expression; but do not believe, I beg of you, that silence (as to this) indicates peace. Think on the words of Tacitus: "They enforce silence and call it peace." Let us not pile up inextinguishable hatred in

*By an order dated December 10, 1914, the Belgian people had to pay a monthly contribution to the war of forty million francs during a year. By a new order, November 10, 1915, this monthly contribution had to be paid until further orders.

†On September 12 the German Government had taken by violence all the money in German marks existing in the National Bank and in the Societe Generale.

the Belgian heart. War and its doings are only to be justified in so far as they are helps toward peace.

Accept, Baron, the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

CHAPTER XXIX

INTERFERENCE OF THE OCCUPYING POWER WITH THE TEACHING OF THE NORMAL SCHOOLS

BEGINNING with the month of February, 1916, the Governor General, on the pretense of doing justice to the Flemish claims, in reality to prepare for the administrative separation which later on he intended to bring about, published a long series of orders concerning the use of Flemish in the primary schools. Certain provisions of these orders were at variance with Belgian legislation. Accordingly, M. de la Vallee Poussin, Secretary General of the Ministry of Sciences and Arts, in a note addressed to the Governor General, declared that he could not become an accomplice in the execution of illegal decrees. The only answer vouchsafed to him by the Governor General was an intimation that he was forbidden for the future the exercise of his functions as well as all access to the office of his ministry.

On the 2d of August Baron von Bissing published a fresh order "relative to the teaching staff in primary and infant schools, also concerning the granting of certificates to qualified teachers."

This order, upsetting the whole teaching of the normal schools in the Flemish provinces, was in flagrant opposition to the Belgian law. In Article 3, paragraph 2, he ventured even to fix the language in which communications to parents should be drawn up. M. Corman, director of primary education, having officially informed the Cardinal of the publication of this order, received this reply:

Archbishop's House, Malines,
October 13th, 1916.

To M. Corman, Director of Primary Education, Brussels.

Sir—You have been kind enough to convey to me, on behalf of the Minister of Sciences and Arts, an order of

August 2d, 1916, concerning the use of languages in the teaching at the normal schools. This order, I grieve to say, ignores The Hague convention and the Belgian constitution. It transgresses the limits fixed by Article 43 to the acts of the occupying power. In virtue of this Article 43, indeed, the steps which the occupying power is authorized to take have exclusively for their object the re-establishment and maintenance of public life and order, by respecting, save where quite impossible, the laws already in force in the country.

The regulation on a novel basis of the use of languages in normal education has no relation whatever to the public life and order of the country. The occupying power by interfering in this matter goes beyond the rôle which is recognized as belonging to it by the law of nations. Furthermore, the provisions contained in Article 3, paragraph 2, is tainted with unconstitutionalism. In virtue of the constitution, Article 23, the use of languages employed in Belgium is optional. It can only be regulated by the legislature, and this regulation can only be enforced in administrative and judicial acts. Our free schools enjoy in this respect the same privileges as private individuals. The correspondence with pupils' parents is on all fours with a correspondence between private persons; no legal enactment fixes the language to be employed nor can any member of the legislature seek to fix it without a direct infringement of Article 23 of the constitution.

Thus the law of 1878, which prescribes the languages to be used in administrative correspondence, only concerns state functionaries. Communes and private individuals make use of what language they choose.

The limitation which the constitution imposes on the legislature is imposed *a fortiori* on the executive. Regard for the law of nations and the Belgian constitution forbids me then to take any part in the enforcement of the order of August 2d on the free normal schools of the diocese of Malines.

Receive, Mr. Director, the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

Though there was no need for them, the Governor General opened two new Flemish normal schools at Laeken and at Uccle. M. Corman, director of primary education, officially informed the Cardinal of this and requested him to appoint for each of these schools an ecclesiastic to whom instruction in religion and morals could be intrusted. The Cardinal refused his assistance to the establishment of these needless schools, designed as they were to exercise a Germanizing influence on the Belgians. The number of his priests had, moreover, been considerably reduced, a good number of them being with the army in Holland or in England, or in the prisons of Belgium or Germany.

This is the reply he addressed to M. Corman:

Archbishop's House, Malines,
November 1st, 1916.

To the Director General of Primary Education.

Sir—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 31st October, in which you inform me that on 6th November next two training colleges for teachers will be opened, one at Laeken, the other at Uccle.

You request me to appoint an ecclesiastic to each of these schools to give instruction in religion and morals or in the event of my considering such nominations unnecessary for the time being, to examine the feasibility of intrusting such instructions to curates.

I regret I see no means of complying with your request owing to the scarcity of priests from which we are suffering. A good number of our clergy are serving as chaplains or stretcher-bearers at the front, and one after another our zealous priests have been sent to prison in Belgium or deported into Germany. Hence the number of priests employed in active work, either in parochial duties or in teaching, is daily growing less; they are overbur-

dened with work, and I shrink from rendering their task still heavier.

Accept the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

CHAPTER XXX

INTERVIEW BETWEEN THE CARDINAL AND BARON VON DER LANCKEN REGARDING THE PASTORAL LETTER "THE VOICE OF GOD"

ANOTHER pastoral letter of the Cardinal, dated Rosary Sunday (October 1st, 1916), entitled "The Voice of God," was the cause of a fresh conflict between the Cardinal and the Governor General.

The first part of the letter was read in all the churches of the diocese on Sunday, October 15th, of the same year.

After speaking of the protracted trial to which Belgium had been subjected, the Cardinal exhorted his flock to pause and consider and endeavor to realize the deep meaning of the circumstances of the times, and fixing their eyes on eternity to listen to the voice of God. "Christ," said he, "gives to us through the mystery of His death and resurrection the key to these events. Life springs from death." The letter concluded with an exhortation to prayer. "Let us be grateful to God. The independence of our country is today no longer subject to doubt; let us bless God for having assured its preservation. Let us pray for those of our dear country who are present and those who are away, our brave prisoners and our dear refugees . . . we must not exclude any one from our prayers, not even our enemies, but Christian theology teaches us to regulate our affections. 'Love with predilection,' says St. Thomas, 'those who do good to you.' Let us then above all pray for our dear soldiers whom we hold so dear, not only on account of the close and intimate ties of blood and patriotism, but also for their whole-hearted devotedness to their country and to us. Let us pray also for their wives and mothers, silent heroines of the great European drama, and finally for the armies of our allies, who, in the east, west and south, fight so

bravely and with such stubbornness for the common cause." The Cardinal furthermore asked for prayers for stricken Poland and the poor Armenian people.

"And let us continue to the end," he concludes, "patiently, perseveringly. 'Sursum corda.' Lift up your hearts. Let us hasten our deliverance. Let us implore God in the words of the holy liturgy, 'Come to my aid, O God, O Lord, make haste to help me.' (Deus in adjutorium meum intende, Domine ad adjuvandum me festina.) Meanwhile be calm, be courageous, do not murmur. Let us apply to our sufferings as patriots what our Saviour said of our eternal salvation, 'He that shall persevere to the end shall be saved.' (Qui perseveraverit usque in finem hic salvus erit.)"

On October 9th the printers of the pastoral letter—MM. Smeesters, father and son—were arrested. In the course of a domiciliary visit made at their printing works, 250 copies of the letter were seized by the police.

On Sunday, October 5th, the very day on which the first part of the pastoral was read from the pulpit, the Kreischef of Malines asked the Cardinal if he could receive the chief of the diplomatic department, Baron von der Lancken, at 7 p. m. To this the Cardinal agreed.

At the appointed hour the Baron presented himself at the Archbishop's house and was conducted to his Eminence.

"I am in an extremely difficult position," said he. "I had hoped that your Eminence would do nothing to provoke fresh dispute, and had, in fact, communicated my impression to the Governor General. And now he is intensely annoyed. 'You see,' said he to me, 'the Cardinal has again published a document, and in spite of my orders ignored the censorship and takes advantage of the occasion to meddle in politics.' "

"I never promised you," answered the Cardinal, "to submit to the censorship. You yourself were one day good enough to grant that it would be very difficult for me to do so and suggested many petty expedients for evading it, none of which satisfied me. The question therefore remained un-

solved, and I informed you that I was preparing a letter for publication. You will recall our conversation and acknowledge that none of your suggested expedients appeared to me desirable. You particularly requested me to send you personally the first copy, not in manuscript but in proof. I replied, 'I am quite willing to send you a copy at the same time that I send the letter to my clergy, but on no account in advance. That would be tantamount to a tacit acknowledgment that I submit my letter to your good pleasure. That I cannot do.' "

"But after all," replied the Baron, "could you not contrive to let a proof copy be left behind on the table in one or other of the houses I am accustomed to visit in Brussels?"

"No, I do not particularly care for these paltry expedients which do not solve the problem. You would always have the right to say that I had in a covert manner recognized your right to censor a document essential to the exercise of my ministry. That is a matter of principle on which I cannot yield."

"Yet we must find some means of coming to an understanding."

"For myself I see but one," answered the Cardinal, "that you affect not to notice what is going on and leave me with a free hand. I had understood, or, if you like that better, conjectured that such was your intention. Accordingly I was not a little surprised to learn that the works of my printer had been raided by the German police."

"It was not with the intention of seizing your letter; Smeesters was implicated in another affair."

"As I was unaware of that, I was greatly surprised. I had intended to send you a copy of my letter as soon as it was in the hands of the various deans in Brussels, and I considered I had a right to expect from you its circulation without let or hindrance, for, after all, there is absolutely nothing in the letter to which you could take exception."

"Nothing to offend me, perhaps, but the Governor General, a soldier among soldiers, who, being obliged to consider the effect your writings may produce in Germany, thinks otherwise. He knows I have come to Malines; in

fact, we had a twenty minutes' conversation about this very letter and I can assure you he is greatly displeased."

"But what has he to complain of?"

"First of all, he takes exception to the phrase in which you affirm that 'nobody today calls the independence of Belgium into question.' "

"But there is nothing mysterious in this assertion. Only this morning I read in the 'Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant' a declaration made by the Socialist deputy Haase to Chancellor von Bethmann-Hollweg. 'You speak of peace in vague terms which fall upon deaf ears. Begin by declaring that you agree to the autonomy of small states, such as Belgium and Serbia, and then your words will be listened to.' I do not take my stand on your feelings nor on those of the German empire when asserting my belief in the independence of my country. My words were based principally on the solemn undertaking repeated over and over again by our allies that they will not consent to discuss peace until Belgium has been liberated. The Holy Father, whose name I mention with reluctance, said the same thing to me in Rome last January."

"Again," replied the Baron, "you say at the end of your letter: 'Let us hasten the hour of our deliverance.' It is this last phrase especially that irritated the Governor General."

"Well, then, Baron, the Governor General does not understand French. It lies with you, who understand and speak it, to explain fully to him the meaning this fragment of a phrase has when read in connection with its context. You have only to read the whole paragraph to perceive its real sense."

"Oh, I have perused the letter four times."

"Then read the paragraph again. Do you not see that these words were inserted therein to introduce the liturgical invocation, 'O Lord, make haste to help us'? They merely imply that by means of prayer and penance we are to merit the help and deliverance of Almighty God. Are my words susceptible of any other interpretation?"

"When I had read it over again I saw that the phrase

could be understood in the sense your Eminence attaches to it, but the Governor General placed quite a different construction upon it."

"For example?"

"He took it to mean, 'Let us hasten to expel the Germans.'"

"Well," replied the Cardinal, "what is one to do? It is not my fault if he is not sensitive to the delicate shades of meaning in our language. And what else was there?"

"Several allusions to current politics."

"As for instance?"

"First of all a reference to Poland, which in the eyes of the Governor General is political, though, personally, I must confess that this particular passage appeared to me quite inoffensive."

"Obviously if Poland is to recover her independence just as many concessions must be made by Russia as by Germany. Then I say distinctly that the country has been laid waste by the advance or retirement of the armies."

"What about the attack you made on the Turks?"

"Pardon me," replied the Cardinal, "I did not attack the Turks, but I take up the cudgels for the Armenians. I have great compassion for their suffering, and as I am suffering with my fellow countrymen, I can sympathize with others in their trials. Is it not natural?"

"But in your letter, your Eminence inveighs against the allies of Germany, and it is this which displeases the Governor General. Moreover, in a subsequent passage your Eminence asks prayers for your allies. Doubtless you refer to the British?"

"The British, the French and all those who defend the same cause as ourselves. Can you imagine that there is a single Belgian Catholic who does not pray for them? But we pray also, I say, for our enemies. Do you wish that I should say for: 'Our armies on the western front'?"

"Yes, that would do excellently."

"Frankly, that borders on sophistry. If I did not fear to wound you, Baron, I should say that you wish to pick a quarrel with me (une querelle d'Allemand).

"But, come, tell me what your intention was in paying me this visit."

"Oh, above all, to explain to your Eminence the difficult position I am in."

"Did you come on behalf of the Governor General with some order in your pocket or merely to ask me for an explanation?"

"I have come with no order whatever. I fear complications and that Smeesters will be punished for printing your pastoral."

"But that disgusts me! If my letter is criminal, I am the first person who should be punished. And if you do not punish me, it is unreasonable to punish an inferior, who has merely executed my orders. But since you leave me free to say what I think, I am quite willing to tell you that I do not consider the passage, which you condemn, of sufficient importance to provoke a public dispute and it would be painful to me to expose my printer to additional punishment. The game is not worth the candle. Let me consider the changes I can make. In a word, it is enough to cut out the words: 'the independence of Belgium is not doubted by any one' and 'let us hasten our deliverance' and substitute for: 'the armies of our allies' 'our armies.' I could make these alterations and it would cost me nothing, but then you would claim victory over me in your press."

"Oh, no, certainly not."

"The country clergy could not be warned in time, but I could inform the deans in the bigger towns, before the reading of the second part of the letter." *

This question being settled, the Baron asked the Cardinal to apply to him whenever he had any cause for complaint. "Is it not better," he said, "to avoid disagreements?"

"Doubtless," replied the Cardinal. "I do not want to

* The Cardinal requested Mgr. Evrard, dean of St. Gudule, to give notice of these changes before the reading of the second part of the letter, ordered for the following Sunday, to the deans of Brussels and district, including Laeken and Uccle, as well as the deans of Wavre, Nivelles, Braine-l'Alleux, Tubize, Hale and Vilvorde. He also advised the dean of Antwerp of the alterations and asked him to communicate them to the neighboring clergy.

quarrel any more than you, for the mere pleasure of it, but I believe that in spite of my good-will and yours a dispute is unavoidable."

"Is your Eminence persuaded of that?"

"Yes. Because the military authorities have a natural tendency to abuse their power against which my conscience must protest. You place a political construction on all our protests and so create discord."

"But is it not better, in the interest of your country, to avoid protests which lead to no result?"

"That is absolutely the fundamental question. You imagine that in our ministry we have no other ambition than to spare ourselves momentary worry and anxiety, or to win some immediate success. A thousand times no! Utilitarianism, even socially, is not our ideal. If St. Paul had spoken like you, we should never have had St. Paul. We should possess neither his epistles nor his example. If the theory, 'What is the good of that,' i. e., what practical advantage do you hope to gain by that—if this theory, I say, had always prevailed we should not have had the Catholic Church. It required three centuries of martyrs to consolidate and propagate the idea that there is something higher than individual and national interests."

"Oh, the martyrs! that is another matter."

"By no means, fundamentally it is the same thing. A martyr is not one who gives his life just for the pleasure of sacrifice; he is one who upholds an incontrovertible truth and makes himself its bond slave, even to offering his liberty and his life in its defense. It would have been easy for the martyrs to burn perchance secretly a few grains of incense before an idol. But this act, materially insignificant, yet for the moment very profitable to the doer, would have been an avowal that he had no absolute belief in the truth which he professed and at once the eternal would have been reduced to the level of the transitory. When the Church was founded, the truth preached was religious truth: the Gospel of Christ. Truth, today, is right and the superiority of its kingdom over passing interests. In either case, there is antagonism between utilitarianism and the necessary

triumph of absolute right—of truth. Thus I have nothing but contempt for those sophisms to which you in your recent correspondence, and with you certain theologians in their utterances, have had recourse, sheltering themselves behind the 'notwehr' for the purpose of justifying the invasion of our country. It is no use to argue; it is no use to twist and turn, Germany has violated an oath and it would be simpler to confess and regret it than to strive by might and main to hide the truth."

With these words the interview ended. Baron von der Lancken took his leave, thanking the Cardinal for the changes he had agreed to make in the text of his pastoral.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE DEPORTATION OF THE UNEMPLOYED

Of all the crimes committed by Germany in the occupied part of Belgium there is perhaps none more abominable than the deportation of the unemployed. In the light of the twentieth century the German Government, scorning all the laws of civilization, introduces again the slavery of days gone by. This crime against human liberty, long and callously premeditated and perpetrated with untold cynicism and brutality, aroused the conscience of the whole world and drew down upon its authors well-deserved abhorrence. The Cardinal, as soon as he learned of the iniquitous steps taken by the Governor General in regard to the unemployed, hastened to address to Baron von Bissing an energetic protest.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
October 19th, 1916.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—The day following the capitulation of Antwerp the distracted population had serious misgivings regarding the lot of Belgians of military age and of those who would reach that age before the end of the occupation. The fathers and mothers of families, by their entreaties, induced me to put the question to the Governor of Antwerp, Baron von Huene, who had the kindness to reassure me and authorize me to reassure the anxious parents on this point. Nevertheless the report had spread through Antwerp that at Liége, at Namur and at Charleroi young men had been seized and forcibly carried off into Germany. I thereupon requested the Governor von Huene to be so good as to con-

firm in black and white the guarantee he had given me by word of mouth, that no action of the kind would be taken at Antwerp. Without delay he replied that the rumors relative to deportations were without foundation, and he immediately sent me in writing, among others, the following declaration: "Young men need have no fear of being carried off into Germany, either for enrollment in the army or to be there employed at compulsory work."

This declaration, drawn up in writing and duly signed, was publicly communicated to the clergy and the faithful of the province of Antwerp, as your Excellency may convince yourself, by the document herewith inclosed, dated October 16th, 1914, and which was read in all the churches.

Immediately on the arrival at Brussels of your predecessor, the late Baron von der Goltz, I had the honor of an interview with him, and I requested him to be so good as to ratify in writing for the country at large, and without any time limit, the guarantee which General von Huene had given me for the province of Antwerp.

The Governor General retained my petition in his own hands in order to examine it at his leisure. The following day he was kind enough to come in person to Malines and to bring me his approval, and he confirmed in the presence of two aides-de-camp and my private secretary the promise that the Belgian citizens' liberties would be respected.

To doubt such a pledge would be to wrong the persons who had signed it, and I proceeded to dissipate, by every means of persuasion in my power, the alarm still prevailing among the families concerned.

Now, heaven save the mark, your government snatches from their homes workmen, who, without fault of their own, are out of employment; it forcibly separates them from their wives and children and deports them into the enemy's country. A host of workmen has already suffered this unhappy fate; more still are threatened with the same violent treatment.

On behalf of the liberty of the home and the liberty of employment of Belgian citizens, in the name of the inviolability of families, on behalf of the moral and religious inter-

ests gravely compromised by this system of deportation, in virtue of the pledge given by the Governor of the province of Antwerp and by the Governor General, the immediate representative of the highest authority of the German empire, I respectfully beg your Excellency to consent to cancel the regulations for compulsory labor and deportation already communicated to the Belgian workmen and to be good enough to restore to their homes those already deported.

Your Excellency will understand how heavy a weight of responsibility I shall be compelled to bear in the eyes of families if the confidence established through my intervention and my request were to be rudely shaken.

I cling to the belief that such will not be the case.

Receive, sir, the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

At the same time that he protested to the Governor General the Cardinal wrote to Baron von der Lancken, chief of the political department, to entreat him to use all his influence to prevent the execution of the threatened measures.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
October 19th, 1916.

To Baron von der Lancken, Chief of the Political Department, Brussels.

Dear Sir—I have had the honor of sending to his Excellency Baron von Bissing a letter of which I herein inclose a copy.

The Governor General has so often expressed, even publicly, his wish to devote a large share of his solicitude to the interests of the occupied parts of the country, and you yourself have so often proclaimed, especially of late, the desire of the German authorities not to perpetuate, under the regime of occupation, the state of war of the early days, that I cannot believe the steps with which your government threatens the workmen, who, without any fault of their own, have been reduced to a state of unemployment, will be enforced.

I trust that you will exert all your influence with the higher authorities to hinder the commission of such a crime.

Do not allege the necessity of protecting public order or of lessening the burdens of public charity. Spare us this bitter irony. You know quite well that public order is not threatened and that every civil and moral force would spontaneously lend its aid were it really menaced. The unemployed are not a burden on any official charitable funds; it is not from your finances that they receive assistance.

Kindly read my letter to the Governor General and consider if it is not as much to Germany's interest as it is ours to respect agreements entered into by two high personalities of your empire.

I am confident that my representations to the Governor General and yourself will be neither misunderstood nor disregarded, and I beg you to accept, Baron, the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

The Governor General answered the Cardinal's protest with a refusal, while trying to justify the steps taken by the German Government.

Government General of Belgium, Brussels,
October 26th, 1916.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

In your esteemed letter of the 19th inst. your Eminence makes the urgent request that the unemployed Belgian workmen should no longer be deported to Germany. While appreciating your Eminence's point of view, I feel at the same time compelled to reply that you have not examined in all its aspects the difficult problem of Belgian unemployment. First of all, your Eminence does not consider in all their bearings the extraordinary circumstances arising from the war, which has now lasted more than two years. The steps now in progress, which your Eminence would wish

to see suspended, are nothing but the necessary consequences of the war, as I hope now to prove.

Your Eminence recalls first the declarations made in October, 1914, by my predecessor and by the Governor of the fortress of Antwerp. These declarations referred to measures directly bearing on the operations of war, and they regarded chiefly men of military age, who, according to the ordinary usage of war, could have been deported as civil prisoners of war. England and France have seized, on neutral ships, all Germans between the ages of seventeen and fifty, and have interned them in concentration camps. Germany has taken no such steps in Belgium, and the assurances given to your Eminence, with a view to calming the civil population, have been uniformly respected. At any rate, that was a proof of the benevolent disposition with which the German Governor General had taken in hand the administration of the occupied territory. Later on, the departure in crowds of young men to join the Belgian army would have fully justified measures similar to those taken by England and France. And yet nothing was done. The removal of Belgian laborers to the German factories, which is only beginning after two years of war, has no connection in principle with the deportation and internment of men of military age. This step does not depend upon the conduct of the war as such, but it is based on economic and social grounds.

As a result of the economical blockade which England has established against Germany, Belgium has been forced to endure more and more the privations which our country has to suffer. Belgium's economic life, which rests chiefly on the importation of raw materials and the export of manufactured goods, has been crushed by the blockade, deprived as she is of the very basis of her commercial existence. The inevitable result of this situation has been unemployment, which has extended to various classes of the population. The system of relief adopted could be reasonably applied to those out of work as long as it was thought that the war would end quickly, but the long duration of the hostilities has brought about an abuse of this

relief and has created unendurable social conditions. Far-seeing Belgians came to me in the spring of 1915 and drew my attention to this point. They pointed out that this relief, no matter what might be the source of the funds placed at the disposal of the committees, would finally have to be borne by the Belgian budgets, without taking into account that these contributions would inevitably create in the workingman a habit of idleness. The result is that the workmen see their physical and moral capacity lessened and artisans of some ability have lost their technical skill and will be useless for Belgian industry when peace has been restored. On this account, and in order to do away with this prevalent apathy for work, I published with the approbation of the competent Belgian ministry my decrees of August, 1915, which were completed by my order of May 15th, 1916. These decrees do not provide for forced labor, save in the case where an unemployed workman becomes a burden to the public relief funds by refusing unreasonably to do work at his trade when a reasonable wage is offered. We have recognized expressly as a lawful reason for refusal any motive based on international law. Thus no workman can be compelled to take part in war work. These orders rest, as your Eminence will acknowledge, on reasons fully justified in law which subordinate the freedom of the individual to the interest of the public. Now that the disadvantages resulting from the situation of 1915 have developed to the point of becoming a veritable public calamity it is imperative to put these orders into execution.

Your Eminence appeals in your esteemed letter to the exalted ideal of family life. I can assure you that I recognize this ideal just as fully as you do yourself, but I believe that in consequence of the duration of the war with its inevitable effects, conditions of life growing daily worse, this idea runs a great risk of disappearing altogether from the life of the working classes, for idleness is the most dangerous enemy of family life. The workman who toils in foreign lands to support his wife and family, as was the case in peace time for many Belgians who quitted their own land to find work abroad, contributes assuredly more to the

happiness of his home than the idler who remains in Belgium. Besides, workmen who get employment in Germany may remain in close contact with their families and are given at regular intervals permission to visit their homes. They can even take their families with them to Germany, where they receive every spiritual care in their own tongue.

A large number of Belgian people has, with good sense, thoroughly grasped the situation. Tens of thousands of Belgian workmen have quite voluntarily betaken themselves to Germany, where, placed on the same footing as the German workmen, they earn much higher wages than they have ever known in Belgium, and instead of perishing of want, like their comrades at home, they add to their own comfort and that of their families. Many others do not venture to follow their example, being held back by a conspiracy of evil influences. Unless they free themselves betimes from these influences, they will, in virtue of my order, be compelled to work. The responsibility for the severe measures, which the adoption of constraint necessarily entails, falls upon those who are dissuading the workers from seeking employment. Finally, I entreat your Eminence, in order to realize the situation in all its complexity, to bear in mind the following important considerations:

The English blockade has forced the occupied territories into a close economic union with Germany. Germany is today the only country with which Belgium maintains intercourse.

Germany has not taken any steps to hinder payments being made in Belgium—a measure usually adopted in the case of enemy countries—and German money continues to pour into Belgium. This stream of money will be still more swollen by the workmen's salaries when they are employed in Germany. In short, the sums of money coming into Belgium as a result of the occupation exceed the war contributions, which—the fact is notorious—are entirely spent in the country. This community of interests, resulting from circumstances, necessarily requires for the two countries an equality of economic factors. As on the one hand there are in Belgium hundreds of thousands of work-

ers without employment, and on the other in Germany work is abundant, the employment in Germany of Belgians who are out of work becomes a social and economic duty, imposed by the solidarity of interests in which the two countries are knit. Any protests which may be raised against this state of things ought to be addressed to England, which, by the blockade she has imposed on Germany, has brought about a constrained situation.

Your Eminence, keeping in mind all that I have said, will admit that the question of deportations forms a problem which should be studied from many standpoints. I should be content if your Eminence, as a result of my summary, would weigh this question, as is needful, from the social and economic point of view.

I present to your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) BARON VON BISSING,
Lieutenant General.

The rigorous measures, far from being relaxed after the protestations which arose on all sides, were only extended further. The German authorities, failing to obtain from the parochial authorities the lists which they had called for of unemployed, took the opportunity of deporting all healthy men. In face of these more and more outrageous proceedings, the Cardinal, in the name of the Belgian bishops, appealed to the public opinion of the whole world and drew up the following terrible charge against the German Government:

CRY OF ALARM RAISED BY BELGIAN BISHOPS AND ADDRESSED BY THEM TO THE BELGIAN PUBLIC

Malines, Nov. 7th, 1916.

The military authorities are daily deporting into Germany from Belgium thousands of inoffensive citizens to subject them there to compulsory labor.

As far back as October 19th we sent to the Governor

General a protest, a copy of which was forwarded to the Holy See, to Spain, to the United States, to Holland, to Brussels, but the Governor General answered that he was debarred from receiving it. At the date of our protest the government regulations threatened only the unemployed. Today all able-bodied men are taken indiscriminately, penned in military wagons and carted off, no one knows where, like a band of slaves.

The enemy proceeds in his work by districts. Vague reports have reached us that men had been arrested in the war zone, at Tournay, Ghent, Alost; but we know not in what circumstances. Between October 24th and November 2d he operated in the district of Mons, Quievrain, Saint-Ghislain, Jemappes, making a clean sweep of eight hundred to twelve hundred men daily. Now he intends to pounce upon the arrondissement of Nivelles.

Here is a sample of a placard announcing the attempt:

"By order of the Kreischef, all male persons over seventeen years of age are bound to appear in St. Paul's Square, Nivelles, on the 8th of November at 8 o'clock (Belgian time) and 9 o'clock (central time), furnished with their identity papers and, in case it may be wanted, with their card from the 'Meldeamt.'

"They must bring with them only a small hand-bag.

"Any one who refuses to present himself will be forcibly deported to Germany and will also be liable to a heavy fine and a long term of imprisonment.

"Ecclesiastics, doctors, lawyers and schoolmasters are exempted.

"The burgomasters will be held responsible for the due execution of this order, which must at once be made known to the inhabitants.

"An interval of twenty-four hours will be allowed between the posting of the notice and the deportation itself."

On the plea of carrying out public works in Belgium the authority in occupation had endeavored to obtain from the communes a list of unemployed workmen. With this order

the great majority of the communes boldly refused to comply.

Three decrees of the government gradually prepared us for the blow that has fallen on us today.

On August 15th, 1915, the first decree came out imposing, under penalty of fine and imprisonment, compulsory labor on unemployed workmen, declaring, however, that the work contemplated was to be done in Belgium only and that breaches of the order would be brought before Belgian law courts.

A second decree of May 2, 1916, reserves to the German authorities the right to provide work for the unemployed and threatened with a penalty of three years' imprisonment and a fine of 20,000 marks any one that carries out work not sanctioned by the Governor General.

A decree dated May 13th, 1916, authorizes the governors and military commandants and the chiefs of arrondissements to order idle workmen to be forcibly taken to the place where they have to work. Compulsory work had already begun, but in Belgium only.

Today it is no longer a question of compulsory work to be carried out in Belgium, but in Germany also, for the benefit of the Germans.

To impart an air of sweet reasonableness to these violent measures the occupying power alleges in the German press, both of Germany and Belgium, as a pretext for these measures, chiefly two reasons: Idle workmen constitute a danger to public order, and they are a charge on the treasury.

The letter we addressed on October 16th to the Governor General and to the chief of his political cabinet has the following: "You know full well that public order is not menaced, and that were it in danger every influence, moral and civil, would spontaneously be offered for its maintenance. Again, the unemployed are not a burden on the bounty of the state; the assistance they receive comes from no funds of yours."

In his reply the Governor General no longer insists on the two previous allegations, but maintains that the sums

given to the unemployed from whatever source they come must eventually burden our finances and that it is the task of a good administrator to lessen such charges, adding that the prolongation of unemployment would impair our workmen's technical skill and on the return of peace they would be of no use for any industry whatever. He does not mention other means of protecting our finances, for instance, to spare us the forced contributions which at the present moment reach the sum of £40,000,000 and is continually augmented by a monthly increase of 40,000,000 francs. We might be spared the requisitions in kind which total several milliards and are exhausting the country.

There were other means, too, for maintaining unimpaired our artisans' technical skill. To leave us, for instance, our machines and equipment, as well as our raw materials and manufactured goods which have left Belgium for Germany, and perhaps quarries and limekilns, where the Germans themselves declare that they intend to send the unemployed. Are not, after all, these the best schools for completing the technical education of our skilled artisans?

The unvarnished truth is that every deported workman is an additional soldier for the German army. He will take the place of a German workman who will straightway join the army.

Thus the situation which we denounce to the civilized world comes to this: Four hundred thousand workmen find themselves against their will unemployed, chiefly because of the regime put into force by the occupying power. Sons, husbands, fathers of families, always mindful of public order, bear their unhappy lot uncomplainingly. The whole nation united provides for their most pressing needs. By dint of economy and wholesale privations, they manage to escape extreme misery and await with self-respect, sprung from an intimacy which the national mourning has forged among them, the termination of our common trials.

Bands of soldiers force their way into their peaceful homes, drag young men from their parents, the husband from his wife, the father from his children, guard every

door and avenue by which wives and mothers are able to issue to bid a last farewell, form their captives into troops of forty and fifty, thrust them by force into military wagons; the locomotive has steam up, and as soon as the train is filled a superior officer gives the signal for departure. Behold another thousand Belgians reduced to slavery and without trial or sentence condemned to the severest punishment of the penal code, only second to the penalty of death, namely, deportation. They know not where they are going nor for how long; all they know is that their work is to benefit the enemy. From several, some by cajolery and others by threats, they extort an undertaking to work, which they dare to call voluntary.

There is no doubt they enroll the unemployed; but, on the other hand, they recruit in great numbers—in the case of the arrondissement of Mons, quite a fourth—men who have never been unemployed and belong to trades of very different categories—butchers, bakers, master tailors, brewers, electricians, farmers; they take even young men, college and university students, or those attending the higher schools.

Yet two high authorities of the German empire had expressly guaranteed to us the liberty of our fellow countrymen.

On the day following the capitulation of Antwerp the distracted population was filled with alarm regarding the lot of the Belgians of military age or of those who would reach that age before the end of the occupation. Baron von Huene, military governor of Antwerp, authorized me to reassure in his name the distressed parents. Nevertheless, as a report was circulated at Antwerp that at Liége, at Namur, at Charleroi, young men had been taken and forcibly carried off to Germany, I begged the Governor to be so good as to confirm in writing the verbal pledges he had given me. He replied that the rumors relative to the deportation were void of foundation and he gave me, without hesitation, this declaration in writing, which was read on Sunday, October 13th, 1914, in all the parish churches of the province of Antwerp: "Young men need have no fear

of being taken off to Germany either to be enrolled in the army, or to be there employed in compulsory labor."

Immediately on the arrival of Baron von der Goltz as Governor General at Brussels, I went to request him to be so good as to ratify for the country at large without limit of time the pledges given by Governor von Huene for the province of Antwerp. The Governor General retained my petition in his hands to examine it at his leisure. The following day he was kind enough to bring to Malines in person his approval and renewed in the presence of two aides-de-camp and my private secretary the promise that Belgian citizens' liberty would be respected.

In my letter of October 1st last to Baron von Bissing, after recalling the understanding come to by his predecessor, I concluded as follows: "Your Excellency will understand how painful the burden of my responsibility will become in the eyes of Belgian families if the confidence reposed in you by my intervention and at my instance should be rudely shaken."

The Governor General answered: "The employment of Belgians, out of work, in Germany, which has begun only after two years of warfare, differs essentially from the internment of men fit to bear arms. The measure has no relation to the conduct of the war properly so called, but has been brought about by social and economic causes."

Just as though, forsooth, the engagements of a man of honor were, like a lease, subject to revision at the end of one or two years, and as though the declaration issued in 1914 did not expressly exclude alike the operations of war and forced labor, as though finally every Belgian workman who takes the place of a German laborer does not contribute to replenish the depleted ranks of the German army.

We, shepherds of these sheep snatched from us by brute force, harassed as we are at the idea of the moral and religious isolation which they will have to endure, impotent witnesses of the sorrows and dismay of so many homes broken up or threatened with this calamity, we turn toward those souls whether believing or unbelieving, who, in

the allied or neutral countries, or even in enemy lands, entertain respect for the dignity of man.

When Cardinal Lavigerie undertook his campaign against slavery, Pope Leo XIII, blessing his mission, said to him: "Opinion is more than ever today the ruling power of the world; it is upon it you must act. You will conquer only by force of opinion."

May divine Providence deign to give to some one, to some authority, a phrase, a pen, to cause men to flock to our humble Belgian standard for the abolition of European slavery.

"Honor before all things." (Nihil præferendum honestati.)

Signed on behalf of the Belgian bishops *

D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

The Governor General had attempted to justify the condemnation of the Belgian working classes to penal servitude and deportation. In his reply the Cardinal refutes all the arguments brought forward by Baron von Bissing for defending the German Government, and proves, in a peremptory manner, the anti-juridical and anti-social character of the deportation of the unemployed.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
November 10th, 1916.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—I refrain from expressing to your Excellency the sentiments awakened in me by your letter (1,100051) in answer to the letter I addressed to you October 19th regarding the deportation of the unemployed.

I have a melancholy recollection of the phrase, which your Excellency, emphasizing each syllable, pronounced in my presence on your arrival at Brussels. "I hope our relations will be cordial. . . . I have received a mission to heal the wounds of Belgium."

My letter of October 19th recalled to your Excellency's

* We were unable to communicate with the Bishop of Brussels.

memory the undertaking given by Baron von Huene, military governor of Antwerp, and ratified some days later by Baron von der Goltz, your predecessor in the General Government at Brussels.

The undertaking was explicit, unconditional, without limit of time. "Young men need not fear being carried off to Germany, either to be enrolled in the army or to be there employed in compulsory labor."

This understanding has been broken daily and thousands of times for more than a fortnight.

Baron von Huene and the late Baron von der Goltz did not speak with any qualification as your dispatch of October 26th seemed to imply: "If the occupation does not last more than two years, men fit for military service shall not be placed in captivity." They stated absolutely: "Young men, and still more men of riper age, shall not at any time during the occupation be imprisoned or employed in compulsory labor."

To justify yourself your Excellency quotes the conduct of England and France, who have, you say, taken from neutral ships all Germans between seventeen and fifty years of age and interned them in concentration camps.

If England and France have been guilty of an injustice, it is on the English and the French that you should have inflicted reprisals, not on an innocent and disarmed people.

But has there been any injustice? Imperfectly informed as we are of all that takes place outside the walls of our prison, we are tempted to believe that the Germans taken and interned belonged to the reserve of the imperial army. They were therefore soldiers whom England and France were justified in sending to concentration camps. Belgium has only recently, that is since August, 1913, had universal military service; the Belgians, therefore, from seventeen to fifty years of age residing in the occupied part of Belgium are civilians and noncombatants. It is a mere play on words to liken them to German reservists in applying to them the misleading appellation "men fit for military service."

The orders, public notices, comments in the press de-

signed to prepare public opinion for the measures being put at this moment into execution, have placed in the forefront two considerations. The unemployed, it was said, are a danger to public security; they are a burden on the state.

It is not true, as said before in my letter of October 19th, that our workmen have upset or simply threatened anywhere to disturb public order. Five million Belgians, hundreds of Americans, are wonder-struck witnesses of the self-respect and unfailing patience of our working classes.

It is not true that workers deprived of work are a burden on the occupying power or on the benevolent funds over which its administration presides. The national committee to which the occupying power makes no contribution is the sole means by which victims of enforced idleness are assisted.

These two answers have been left without reply.

The letter of October 26th seeks another method of justification. It alleges that the measure by which the unemployed have been struck so grievously has been "brought about by social and economic causes."

"It is because it has at heart more earnestly and more intelligently than ourselves the interest of the Belgian nation that the German Government rescues the laborer from idleness and saves him from losing his technical skill. Compulsory labor is the price to be paid for the economic advantages procured by our commercial exchanges with the empire.

"Moreover, if the Belgian has to complain of this state of affairs, let him address his complaints to England. She is the great criminal. She by her policy of isolation has brought about this restricted measure."

Every Belgian workman sets free a German workman who will become an additional soldier for the German army. It is this fact in all its nakedness that dominates the situation. The author of the letter himself feels this glaring fact, for he writes: "The measure has no connection whatever with the conduct of the war properly so called." It has, therefore, a connection with the war improperly so called. What does this mean except that the Belgian work-

man does not indeed bear arms, but frees the hands of the Germans who will take up arms. The Belgian worker is constrained to co-operate indirectly. This is in palpable contradiction with the spirit of The Hague convention. Again the lack of work is not the fault of the Belgian workman, nor of England; it is an effect of the German occupation and its regime.

The occupying power has taken possession of considerable supplies of raw materials destined for our national industry; it has seized and sent off to Germany the tools, the machines and metals of our workshops and factories. The very possibility of national work being thus eliminated, there remained for the workman but one alternative: to work for the German empire either here or in Germany, or to remain idle. Some tens of thousands of workmen under the pressure of fear or famine agreed, under constraint for the most part, to work for the foreigner: but four hundred thousand workmen preferred to give themselves over to idleness with all its attendant privations rather than to do an ill-service to their country. They lived in poverty with the help of slender assistance allowed them by the national committee of help and alimentation, under the control of the protecting ministers of Spain, America and Holland. Calm and self-respecting, they bore without a murmur their painful lot. Nowhere was there any rising or sign of rising; master and workmen awaited with patience the end of our protracted trial.

Nevertheless communal administrations and private initiative endeavored to lessen the undeniable inconvenience of unemployment. But the occupying power paralyzed all their efforts. The national committee endeavored to organize a course of technical instruction for the benefit of the unemployed. This scheme of instruction, characterized by a tender regard for the workman's self-respect, wished to take him by the hand, to enlarge his capacity for work and thus prepare the way for the country's resurrection. Who thwarted this noble enterprise, the plan of which had been carefully thought out by the great captains of industry? Who? Why, the power in occupation. Nevertheless the

communes did their best to initiate works of practical utility to be carried out by the unemployed. These the Governor General would not permit without his previous sanction, a sanction which he generally refused. I am told that the Governor General in not a few cases graciously gave his permission for works of this kind with the express stipulation that the unemployed should not be engaged on them.

In fact, they wanted unemployment. The German army indirectly was recruited from the ranks of those out of work.

No, the Belgian workman is far from lazy; nay, he worships labor. In all the economic struggles of modern times he has proved his worth. When he rejected posts commanding a big salary offered him by the occupying authority, he did so from patriotic self-respect. We shepherds of the people, intimately acquainted with their sorrows and anxieties, we know with what great cost they preferred independence coupled with privation to comfort and ease linked with subjection.

The letter of October 29 boldly states that the nation chiefly to blame for the unemployment of our workmen is England, because she hinders raw materials from entering Belgium.

England generously allows foodstuffs to enter Belgium under the control of neutral states—Spain, the United States and Holland. She would certainly under the same control permit the entrance of raw materials required by our industries, provided Germany would consent to our retaining them and did not pounce on our manufactured goods.

But Germany by various methods, notably by the cunning organization of her "Centrales," over which no Belgian or any one of the protecting ministers exercises any official control, absorbs a considerable quantity of our agricultural produce and of the country's manufactured goods. The result is a disquieting rise in the cost of living, the cause of painful privations to those who have used up their savings or never had any. The community of interests, the advantage of which the letter lauds to the skies, is not the normal equilibrium of commercial exchange, but the predominance of the strong over the weak.

As to this condition of economic inferiority to which we are reduced, do not, I pray, represent it to us as a privilege that justifies forced labor for our enemy's profit, and counterbalances the deportation of legions of innocent beings into a land of exile.

After the penalty of death, slavery—deportation—is the heaviest punishment known to the penal code.

Belgium, that has never done you any harm, has she deserved at your hands this treatment calling to heaven for vengeance?

Sir, I recalled at the outset your whole utterance: "I have come to Belgium with a mission to heal the country's wounds."

Two years ago the excuse made for death, pillage and conflagration was that it was war. Perhaps for one party, whom charity too kindly excused, it was the intoxication of opening victories. Today it is war no longer. It is frigid calculation, deliberate destruction, the empire of force over right, the abasement of human nature, a challenge to humanity. It lies with your Excellency to stop these cries of conscience in revolt.

Receive, sir, the homage of our sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

The preceding letter having been returned to the archbishop's house by the postal authorities because unstamped, the Cardinal sent it a second time to Baron von Bissing with the following note:

Archbishop's House, Malines,
November 12th, 1916.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General,
Brussels.

Your Excellency—The inclosed letter, dated November 10th, will reach your Excellency late, because it has been returned to me. It had been posted unstamped.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

The Governor General shirked the discussion. To the closely knitted arguments of the Cardinal he merely opposed his former considerations, as expounded, almost word for word, in his despatch of October 26th.

Government General of Belgium, Brussels,
November 23rd, 1916.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your Eminence's esteemed letter of the 10th inst., also the note which you sent on the 15th inst. to explain the delay in the arrival of your letter. My answer is as follows:

Your Eminence wrote to me on the 19th of October last with the object of putting an end to the deportation of Belgian unemployed into Germany. In my reply of October 19th, while fittingly realizing your Eminence's standpoint, I set forth the reasons which induced the occupying power to form its decisions respecting the unemployed. These decisions were not come to arbitrarily, nor without ample investigation of this difficult problem, but were on the contrary the result of an exhaustive study of all the aspects of this question. The necessity of the steps taken was recognized as unavoidable. In short, I feel justified in referring your Eminence to the considerations which I set out in my letter of October 26th. The reasons you allege for combating them rest either on the mistaken interpretation you give them, or are derived from theories which from their very nature I cannot admit, for such widespread unemployment in Belgium is a serious sore in the body politic, and from this point of view a benefit would be conferred on the unemployed if work were provided for them in Germany. In this sense the steps taken are by no means contrary to the desire I expressed to your Eminence the very moment I arrived in Belgium, to remedy the evils the war has inflicted on the Belgian people. I must also maintain that your Eminence fails to understand the reality of facts, when you seek to deny my efforts to restore the economic life of Belgium, efforts which have often been crowned with success, and also when you say that, so far from favoring the restoration of

industry, the occupying power has endeavored to create an artificial state of unemployment. England has imposed unacceptable conditions on the importation of raw materials into Belgium and on the exportation of manufactured goods. These questions were at the proper moment the subject of constant negotiations with the competent authorities of Belgium and neutral countries. I will not enter into details; that would take me too far afield. I content myself with repeating that in their ultimate analysis the deplorable conditions that obtain in Belgium are a result of the English blockade just as the confiscation of raw material was a measure also dictated by that policy. Again, I am absolutely convinced that from the economic point of view the occupying power guarantees to Belgium all the advantages which can be secured for her, taking into account the distress caused by England.

In carrying out the steps taken with regard to the unemployed, my officials have met with a long series of difficulties entailing annoyances, which have reacted also upon the whole population. All that could have been avoided, had the various municipal bodies shown good will and facilitated the execution of these measures.

In the actual circumstances it was needful to adopt more general measures, the first result of which was to oblige persons other than the unemployed to answer the roll-call. But arrangements were made to preclude all possibility of error, but those belonging to certain professions were dispensed from appearing, while genuine appeals are either heard at once or passed on for investigation.

From all the above facts, your Eminence will perceive the impossibility of complying with your desire to put a stop to the line of action we have decided upon, but, on the contrary, the execution of these measures, in spite of all the difficulties we meet with, will be carried out in the best interests of all.

(Signed) BARON VON BISSING,
Lieutenant General.

In a fresh letter to Baron von Bissing, the Cardinal maintains that his arguments have been left unanswered; he protests once more against the brutal way in which the recruiting of the so-called unemployed everywhere takes place.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
November 29th, 1916.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General of Belgium.

The letter which your Excellency does me the honor to write me, dated November 23rd, is disappointing. In several circles, that I had reason to believe well informed, it was asserted that your Excellency had felt it your duty to lay a protest before the highest authorities of the empire against the regulations you were forced to apply to Belgium. I counted, therefore, on at least some delay in the application of these measures, pending a fresh examination, and in a mitigation in the method of executing them.

But lo and behold! without a word of answer to any one of the arguments by which I proved in my letters of October 19th and November 10th the illegal and anti-social nature of the condemnation of the Belgian workingmen to forced labor and deportation, your Excellency confines yourself to repeating in your letter of November 23rd the very text of your letter of October 26th. These two letters are, in fact, identical both in matter and form.

On the other hand the recruiting of the so-called unemployed is carried out most of the time without any regard to the observations of the local authorities. Many reports I hold in my hands bear witness that the clergy are brutally kept at a distance, the mayors and local councilors silenced; the recruiting officers find themselves in the presence of individuals unknown to them and arbitrarily make their choice from among their number. Instances of this abound. I will give you two recent examples from a crowd of others which I hold at your Excellency's service.

On November 21st the recruiting of forced labor took place in the village of Kersbeek-Miscom. Of the 1,325 inhabitants of the commune, the recruiting officers took away

ninety-four in a body without distinction of social status or profession; farmers' sons, men who have to support aged and infirm parents, fathers of families who left wife and children in want; men who were as needful to their families as their daily bread. Two families, both of them, saw four sons carried off at the same time. Of the ninety-four thus deported, only two were really unemployed.

In the region of Aerschot the recruiting took place on November 23rd. At Rillaer, Gelrode and Rotselaer young men who supported their widowed mothers, farmers, the heads of numerous families—one of them more than fifty years of age with ten children—cultivating the land and owning several head of cattle, who had never received a penny from public charity, were taken away by force in spite of all their protests. In the little village of Rillaer, as many as twenty-five young lads of seventeen were taken away.

Your Excellency would have wished that the communal authorities be accomplices in these odious recruitings; neither their legal position nor their conscience would allow them to do so. But they could have enlightened the "recruiters" and are specially qualified for that. Priests, who know the common people better than any one else, could render these officials valuable help. Why is their assistance refused?

At the end of your letter your Excellency reminds me that professional men are not molested. If only the unemployed were taken away I could understand this exception. But if the able-bodied are enrolled indiscriminately that exception is unfair. It would be iniquitous to throw the whole burden of deportation on the working classes. The middle classes ought also to share in the sacrifice imposed on the nation by the occupying power, however cruel this sacrifice may be, and justly so, because it is cruel. Numbers of my clergy have entreated me to demand for them a place in the vanguard of the persecuted. I record this request and submit it to you with pride.

I still wish to believe that the authorities of the empire have not said their last word, that they will not be unmindful of our undeserved sorrows, of the reprobation of the

civilized world, of the verdict of history and of the chastisement of God.

Accept, Excellency, the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

The Governor General commissioned the chief of the political department to acknowledge receipt of the Cardinal's letter of November 29th, reserving the right of answering it himself later on.

Political Department of the Government General of Belgium, Brussels. *December 5th,* 1916.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

I have the honor to inform your Eminence that the Governor General has noted with interest the remarks anent the question of the unemployed, which you made in your letter of the 29th inst., nevertheless, in consequence of a brief absence, he will be unable to reply for some days. To my great regret the pardon of F. Franch,* of Malines, cannot be granted for the present. But when he has served half his sentence, then, if your Eminence wishes to present a request in his behalf, I have reason to hope that it will be crowned with success. I present to your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem, and I am yours devotedly,

(Signed) LANCKEN.

Von Bissing, in spite of his promise, did not answer the letter of November 29th. He confined himself to informing the Cardinal, through Baron von der Lancken, that he could not accept the help offered by the priests in the work of enrolling the unemployed.

Political Department of the Government General of Belgium, Brussels. *December 9th,* 1916.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

In reply to your esteemed letter of November 27th

* F. Franch, in religion F. Servasius, Superior of the Franciscans at Malines, had been sentenced to a year's imprisonment on a charge of having had printed a poem offensive to the Germans. In a letter dated November 11 the Cardinal interceded in his favor.

last, I have the honor to inform your Eminence that the Governor General, after investigating the case, has been unable to make use of his right of reprieve in favor of the Engineer Uytebroek and the Railwayman Mertens, condemned to death for espionage. In regard to Wanty, no definite decision can be taken until it has been ascertained by medical examination whether he is of sound mind and therefore responsible for his actions.*

The Governor General instructs me to inform your Eminence, in reply to your letter of November 29th, that he is unfortunately unable to grant to priests a kind of official co-operation in recruiting the unemployed. But, taking into account the reasons assigned by your Eminence, the Governor General leaves the priests free to attend the offices of the recruiting authorities and there impart their information and express their wishes before the enrollment is begun.

I present to your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) LANCKEN.

Several days later the Cardinal sent the parish priests of his diocese the following instructions:

"In spite of the protests addressed to Germany by the Sovereign Pontiff and several neutral states, the deportation of our civil population still continues. It is our duty to lessen to the best of our ability an evil we are powerless to prevent.

"The moment that notices to assemble are placarded in your parish, please warn persons who do not depend on public assistance to provide themselves with a receipt for the payment of this year's taxes, duly certified by the communal authorities. The sick and delicate must ask their doctor for a certificate of ill health; workmen who are employed must ask their masters for a declaration, countersigned by the burgomaster, that they are in employment.

"Acting in concert with influential persons of your parish, take specially to heart the interests of those parishioners

* The Cardinal interceded on behalf of the condemned men in a letter addressed to Baron von der Lancken, dated November 27.

who, according to the instructions of the German authorities, are exempt from deportation. Then take joint action with the communal authorities, the national committee for relief and food supplies, and your well-to-do and devout parishioners, in order to provide for the indigent, whose departure is probable, clothes and other necessaries.

"On the eve of their departure, or the day before, invite those who are going off to come to confession. Provide an adequate number of confessors for them, celebrate mass for their intention, to which you will be careful to summon their children, grandchildren and interested adults, to the end that the communion made by them, together with their whole family, may prove a comfort to them and a memory which they can carry away with them into exile. In a suitable instruction, exhort them to remain steadfast in their faith and their moral and religious practices during the period of their absence. At home prayers will be recited for them. Give those who are going away a rosary, a scapular and a New Testament.

"The day following their departure make an appeal to the best of your charitable parishioners, both men and women, get into contact with the St. Vincent de Paul Society, with the Ladies of Mercy, the Third Order of St. Francis, the congregations and confraternities, the manifold societies affiliated with the diocesan Federation of Catholic Women, of which the Abbe Halflants is the director, and form with their help and under the direction of the parish priest or his delegate a committee of moral assistance, who will undertake to visit stricken families, to comfort, advise and help them. Give them moral support and help them materially, if need be. A Christian parish forms one family. When in a family one member suffers, all suffer; when it enjoys prosperity, every one shares therein. And so not one single home in the parish should be left out, unknown or forgotten. If this were desirable in normal times, it should be absolutely necessary in these distressing days. Those who have leisure ought to place themselves at the disposal of those who have none. The superfluity of some ought to minister to the wants of others. Mutual help so understood and

practiced is but the fulfillment of the law of Christ. Bear ye one another's burdens, says the Apostle Paul, and so you shall fulfill the law of Christ.

"The parish priests who are in need of some help in their ministry of charity may come or send some one to me for it, but I should like them to be good enough to fix approximately the amount of help they require. We must leave no stone unturned to effect the repatriation of those who, according to the German Government's declarations, ought to be immune from deportation. To that end, a committee has been organized in our Episcopal Curia to deal with cases calling for redress."

From the very beginning of the occupation, the Cardinal had over and over again begged both the military and ecclesiastical authorities of the empire for permission to send Belgian priests to prison camps in Germany, but in vain. Undaunted by the successive rebuffs he met with, he returns once more to the attack on behalf of the victims of this system of deportation; he appeals to the German bishops and entreats them to use their influence to obtain permission for Belgian priests to go into the land of exile, so as to afford the unfortunate deported the consolations of religion.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
January 23rd, 1917.

Most Eminent Lords—I pray God to enlighten your Eminences so that you may recognize the spirit of charity in which this letter is written and be inspired to read it in the same light. I cannot forget that my previous correspondence was received by you with undeserved distrust, but now that I have to deal with interests so exclusively religious, my Christian confidence triumphs over my fears.

Your Eminences are aware that there are some thousands of military and civil Belgians—we do not know the exact number—confined in the German prisons. Information reaches us from time to time bringing the sad news that a considerable number of them have gradually abandoned their religious practices. One of the reasons for this pro-

gressive indifference is the antipathy inspired in them by chaplains whose language is a constant reminder of a belligerent nation and a sorrowful past. It avails little to say that the chaplains are charitable and the prisoners in the wrong. I refrain from passing judgment on this fact, but none the less it is a fact which we, as shepherds of souls, cannot but bitterly deplore. Up to quite recently the military authorities have refused even to those condemned to death a priest of their own nationality and speaking their own language. I know of nothing more deplorable than this. It cannot be denied that faith must be raised to the level of heroism, if the prisoners are to be inspired with filial confidence in a priest who, from the human point of view, appears to them in the light of an envoy from an enemy power.

The oft-repeated petitions of the Belgian episcopate, to which I am assured the German bishops have been good enough to lend support, even the august intervention of his Holiness himself, have not yet succeeded in bringing about any improvement in this state of things.

Now, the occupying power has deported and continues to deport thousands of civilians, Flemings and Walloons, and sends them we know not where into camps and factories, compelling them to work to the advantage of the enemy. These wretched men suffer from hunger and cold; many of them are spat upon and beaten because they refuse to work "voluntarily." It is easier for you than it is for us to verify this cruel treatment and have it brought to an end. We tremble, and the mothers of families tremble, at the thought of the danger to which the faith and the morals of these poor, forsaken men are exposed. They feel isolated, without home life, far from the sacraments and out of contact with their parochial Belgian clergy.

I am loath to believe that your Eminences feel no sympathy with us in our anxiety and that you will hold your powerful support from us now.

If the German Empire will not grant the repatriation of our fellow-citizens, whom, contrary to all truth, it styles unemployed, a burden on public funds, obtain for us, I en-

treat you, permission to send them our priests to protect their morals and safeguard their faith. These priests are ready to endure every sacrifice. They will agree not to return to Belgium save with those to whom they earnestly desire to devote themselves.

I intrust with all confidence my petition to your apostolic hearts, which petition is a joint one from the Belgian clergy and episcopate, the mothers, wives and children of our Christian families.

Receive, my Lord Cardinals, the assurance of my respectful and religiously devoted sentiments.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

The Cardinal Archbishop of Cologne and other German bishops made pressing and repeated attempts, but without success, to obtain from the military authorities permission for the Belgian priests to accompany those deported.

The United States protested against the transfer of Belgian workmen to Germany. The Imperial Government answered that it would only deport the unemployed who were in receipt of outside help. Consequently, persons occupying an independent position and men actually in work would be exempt from deportation.

On the other hand, in reply to a note from the Netherlands Government, the German Government declared that it would not deport Belgians who had taken refuge in Holland in October, 1914, and had entered Belgium on the distinct understanding that they would not be molested. Being powerless to put an end to the enrollment of men, the Cardinal was at least desirous of contributing by every means at his command to the repatriation of these two classes of the deported. As announced in his instructions to his priests, he established at the archbishop's house an office for the reception of appeals. In his first request to the Governor General he appeals for the repatriation of 698 persons.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
January 24th, 1917.

To His Excellency Baron von Huene, Interim Governor General, Brussels.

In its reply to the protest made by the United States against the deportation of Belgium citizens into Germany, the Imperial Government declared that the transfer should be limited to those only who were receiving help from public funds and had no work in Belgium. I have the honor of inviting your Excellency's attention to the cases of men belonging to my diocese, the transfer of whom is no doubt due to mistakes made in recruiting.

As the certificates joined to the petition of repatriation duly attest, these deported persons held an independent position or were engaged in work remunerative enough to enable them to provide adequately for their own wants and those of their dependents. In order to avoid discussion respecting certain certificates which mention a different trade from that carried on by the holder before the outbreak of hostilities, I think it necessary to inform your Excellency that in consequence of the mobilization of our army, when war was declared, and the exodus of part of our population, many workmen have for the time being changed their trade.

Those among our fellow countrymen who fled to Holland and only returned on the assurance that they would not be molested, find themselves in a peculiar position. The reply of the German Government to the note of the Netherlands Government, dated November 29th, 1916, regarding the deportation of Belgians, aims at recognizing the exceptional position affecting a considerable number of the people of my diocese. We have, therefore, been satisfied with proving their presence in Holland in 1914.

The forms have been filled in by the parochial clergy themselves, or under their instructions, and countersigned by the mayors of the communes.

To facilitate the work of your Excellency's officials, we have forwarded them to you in duplicate, together with the attestations attached thereto. They are classified ac-

cording to communes, grouped by deaneries and arranged in alphabetical order.

Today I am handing your Excellency a first list containing in duplicate 698 forms affecting the inhabitants of the deaneries of Contich, Diest, Jodoigne and Orp-le-Grand.

I sincerely hope that, as the result of your Excellency's kind offices, 698 exiles will soon be restored to their afflicted families.

Accept, sir, the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

The petitions on behalf of the unemployed deported to Germany were sent in rapid succession. On January 29th, 1917, the Cardinal forwarded to the Governor General 325 petitions for repatriation; on February 1st, 530; February 7th, 515; February 15th, 516; February 17th, 593; February 26th, 563; March 5th, 408, and May 21st and 22d, 65.

The archives of the archbishop's house contain one solitary reply from the Governor General to these various letters, as follows:

Government General of Belgium, Brussels,
February 12th, 1917.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

I have the honor to inform your Eminence in reply to your esteemed letter of the 7th inst., that the petitions asking for the repatriation of Belgians deported to Germany as unemployed will be submitted to the competent German authorities.

Authority to return to Belgium will be granted to those who can prove that they have been unjustly deported.

I present to your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) BARON VON BISSING,
Lieutenant General.

As the communal authorities declined to hand in the list of unemployed, the occupying power, to compass its end, resorted to an indirect expedient. It summoned to the "mel-

deamt" all persons occupying an independent position as well as men actually in work. A special stamp had to be affixed to their identity card, certifying that they were not unemployed and were exempt from deportation. All those whose identity card was not furnished with this stamp were to be regarded as out of work and taken to Germany.

A body of nineteen Malines priests, at the head of which was Canon Vranken, the Cardinal's secretary, refused to lend their co-operation to this scheme and addressed the following letter to the Kreischef:

Malines, December 24th, 1916.

To the Colonel Pohlmann, Kreischef of Malines.

We the undersigned members of the Malines clergy have reason to believe that our summons to the "meldeamt" on Wednesday next, 27th inst., is occasioned by our non-appearance at the general convocation on Friday, 8th inst.

We have the honor to inform you that our attitude had been maturely considered and was dictated by conscientious motives. It is impossible for us to co-operate in a line of action which is an infringement of the primary rights of our workingmen and adverse to their best interests.

Receive, sir, the expression of our sincere esteem.

The Governor General inflicted a fine of 100 marks on each of the signatories of this letter, and Baron von der Lancken was instructed to advise the Cardinal to that effect.

Political Department of the Government General of Belgium, Brussels.

I. 918. *January 28th,* 1917.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

The Governor General has directed me to inform your Eminence of the following facts: To enable him to select those of the unemployed who are to be deported from Malines and to facilitate the investigation of each individual case, the Kreischef summoned various classes of persons to the Meldeamt, each one on a different day during the month of December, and among these were included ecclesiastics. Everybody enjoying immunity from deportation was re-

quired—as has been expressly stated in a public notice—to have his identity card stamped in a special way at the Meldeamt. The said notice further stated that any one hindered from appearing in person could be represented by another on reasons for his nonappearance being given. The priests in question could doubtless have availed themselves of this regulation, but they preferred to absent themselves from the bureau and did not appear on a second date assigned to them. These priests afterward sent to the Kreischef a letter, in which they declared that their attitude in not answering the summons had been dictated by their unwillingness to co-operate in the measures adopted against the unemployed. As, according to the wording of the notice posted up, the question of the co-operation of priests did not arise, the motives assigned were not admissible, consequently the Kreischef had to acknowledge that the priests by their nonappearance had contravened his orders, and by sentence of the Governor General each of them was mulcted in a fine of 100 marks.

The Governor General deems it fitting to inform your Eminence of these facts. His Excellency cannot but perceive an open contradiction between the priests' declaration signed in the first place by Canon Vranken and the proposal made by your Eminence to seek the advice of the priests in the selection of the unemployed. In your letter of November 29th, your Eminence said: "Priests who know the common people better than any one else would render valuable assistance in making these inquiries. Why is this aid refused?" Taking into consideration these words of your Eminence, the Governor General finds their refusal to obey the Kreischef's formal order altogether inexplicable and therefore regrets his inability to remit the fine imposed upon them.

I offer your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem and I am yours devotedly,

(Signed) LANCKEN.

The Cardinal merely acknowledged the receipt of this letter of January 28th from Baron von der Lancken. He

replied to the interim Governor General of Belgium, Baron von Huene, upholding the conduct of his priests and pointing out how odious were the steps taken against them by the Governor General.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
January 31st, 1917.

To Baron von der Lancken, Chief of the Political Department of the Governor General of Belgium.

I have received the dispatch of January 28th you were good enough to send me on behalf of the Governor General.

The answer herewith inclosed which I have the honor to address to his Excellency deals with such delicate questions that it appears to me more judicious to write to him directly on the subject.

Receive, sir, the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
January 31st, 1917.

To His Excellency Baron von Huene, interim Governor General of Belgium, Brussels.

Your Excellency intrusted to the chief of your political department, Baron von der Lancken, the task of writing me to the effect that you fail to understand the attitude of the Malines clergy who deemed it their conscientious duty to decline the offer of having their identity card stamped.

It seems to you that this attitude is out of harmony with this passage in my letter of November 29th, 1916: "Priests who know the common people better than any one else would render the recruiters valuable assistance. Why is their aid refused?"

The military government has sentenced each of these ecclesiastics to a fine of 100 marks, and your Excellency declares that to your regret you cannot but ratify the sentence.

The action of the clergy of Malines was taken with full deliberation just as your Excellency supposes, and their reasons for thus acting were given in writing to the Kreischef. That the intentions of this gentleman were well meaning in

the case of certain ranks of society, I do not doubt, but his method of procedure, though welcome to the middle class, was a menace to the working classes. In order to organize more methodically and more surely the calling up of a part of the Belgian people destined to serve by fair means or foul the economic interests of the enemy, and therefore indirectly military interests, the occupying power ordered the communal authorities to draw up a list of the unemployed. Most of the magistrates of Belgian communes, fully realizing that they were intrusted with the duty of safeguarding national integrity, refused to furnish under the heading "unemployed" a list of free citizens destined to be transformed the next day into a list of prescribed ones.

Checked by this refusal, the military authorities resorted to a roundabout way. The "unemployed" not being registered, their only remaining resource was to register those who were "employed." What could not be obtained by direct means, it was sought to procure by an indirect maneuver, viz.: by graciously offering a stamp to those whom they wanted to spare and thus by a process of subtraction to secure a list of unemployed who were to be deported.

After the threat addressed to the burgomasters came the bait offered to the burghers. The two attempts made by the military authorities had the same end in view: namely, to bring Belgians to co-operate in organizing the deportation of their fellow-countrymen. Both were to have the same result, viz., the snatching from their homes of a class of citizens as innocent and as free as any other Belgians and to force them into exile and to work for the enemy. The fact that all those hoping to reap some advantage from the possession of a stamped card did not suspect the presence of a hook concealed in the bait can be readily conceived. The fact that men of the world with family interests confided to their charge did not fully realize all that their feelings of national solidarity demanded is not to be used as a grievance against them; but the priest with whom temporal interests are as nothing compared with those that are eternal, the priest who in his capacity of preacher of the gospel and official representative of the Christian law would blush with

shame if he failed in his personal conduct to act in conformity with its loftiest teachings, the priest, protector of the weakest, has, arising out of his moral obligations, a keener insight, thus enabling him to realize that he would be doing less than his duty were he not to push fraternal devotion beyond the strict requirements of the common law. These are the lofty ideals by which the clergy of Malines have been inspired, and of which your Excellency has had a glimpse in the letter addressed to the Kreischef on December 24th last.

That is why I wrote to Baron von Bissing in my letter of November 29th: "It would be iniquitous to let deportation press hard on the working classes only. In the sacrifice imposed by the occupying power—cruel though it be—and precisely because it is cruel—the middle class ought also to share. A large number of my clergy have implored me to claim for them a place in the vanguard of the persecuted. I wish to place their offer on record and proudly submit it to you."

The lines your Excellency quotes from that same letter of November 29th are in harmony with the attitude adopted by the Malines clergy as well as with all my correspondence dealing with the deportations.

In my letters of October 19th and November 10th and also in most of mine of November 29th, I made a protest with all the energy of which I was capable and with which the love of justive and charity had inspired me, against the kidnapping of thousands of our countrymen. Nevertheless, fearing that the military authorities would remain deaf to these protests, I added to my entreaties this very natural thought: "If, however, you should prove obstinate in injustice, allow at least our priests to lessen the evil your acts of violence are inflicting on our people; accept our co-operation to save what, according to your own instructions, iniquitous though they be, can still be saved." But this you would not have. You have withheld your line of action from the control of those who, by their social vocation and their daily contact with the lower classes, are best qualified to exercise it. You signified to me personally that I was not to

offer a single word of comfort to those about to leave. Forced to submit to your military regulations, I respected the order.

But there is a barrier before which military force is held up and behind which is intrenched inviolate right. On this side of the barrier, it is we, the representatives of moral authority, who speak as masters. We cannot and will not let the Word of God be shackled.

The military Governor has had the effrontery to fine nineteen priests 100 marks each for having declined from conscientious motives to avail themselves of a privilege extended to them. So be it. They will pay the 100 marks out of their modest salaries, or if unable to meet this demand, they will perhaps satisfy you at the expense of their liberty. Very well, so be it once more. I know the spirit of our priests well enough to foresee that they will be patient all the same. They will drink to the dregs the cup of bitterness held forcibly by you to the lips of a people which has never wished you anything but good.

We will wait in patience for the day of retaliation, not retaliation on this earth, however; that we have already, for the occupation regime you have forced upon us is abhorred by everybody in the world who has any sense of honor. I speak of the verdict of history; I speak of the inevitable judgment of the God of Justice. To yourself, who are, if I am credibly informed, equally with the humblest of our workmen a son of the Church of God, I venture to add you are burdening your conscience with a heavy weight, in sheltering behind your high authority an act of martial law which treats as a crime an act of Christian and pastoral abnegation.

Accept the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

Acting on the advice of the Marquis de Villalobar, the Spanish Minister in Brussels, a number of prominent Belgians, animated by a desire to exhaust every possible means to put an end to the deportations, had recourse to a direct

appeal to the Emperor. On Sunday, February 11th, the Spanish minister and M. Levie, minister of state, repaired to the Archbishop's house to acquaint the Cardinal with their plan and to ask him to join hands with them. The interview resulted in an agreement that the Cardinal should draw up the appeal and that M. Levie should be commissioned to gather the signatures.

On Wednesday a copy of the document was handed to the Spanish Minister. He in turn passed it on to Baron von der Lancken, who at once dispatched it to Berlin. On Thursday, the 15th, M. Levie, Baron de Favereau, and Prince de Ligne, on the introduction of the Marquis de Villalobar, handed the appeal officially to Baron von der Lancken, who was shortly to leave for Berlin. The chief of the political department promised his active support, as well as that of the Governor General, in order to obtain from the Emperor the favorable answer to the appeal.

The text of the petition runs as follows:

Imperial Majesty.

The signatories of this appeal with heavy hearts have seen and still see every day thousands of their brethren torn from their families and dragged forcibly into exile, where they are compelled to choose between starvation and work which offends their dignity as patriots. The representatives of the various public bodies in Belgium, ministers of state, the hierarchy, members of Parliament, the magistracy and the bar, commercial and industrial magnates, trade unions and workmen's societies, have raised their voices on behalf of their countrymen and have brought to the notice of the General Government with that candor which is the mark of a free people, the deep distress of the nation, the causes that have brought it about, those that foster it and those that day by day augment it.

If your Majesty has leisure to peruse these documents and will deign to verify the grounds on which they rest, there can be no doubt that you will be inclined to do us justice. You can hardly imagine the wave of indignation which would pass over your empire if ever your own subjects were

unreasonably expatriated and coerced into consolidating by their work a foreign domination.

Your Imperial Majesty prides yourself on your loyalty to your faith. May we not then be allowed to remind you of the simple and yet striking words of the Gospel, "Do unto others that which you would have done to yourself"?

The Emperor of Germany will understand how repugnant to our national *amour-propre* is soliciting as a favor what in normal times we could justly claim as a right.

But the life and liberty of a great number of our fellow citizens, whom we love as brethren, is at stake. We have had the courage to stifle every other feeling in our breasts but that of brotherhood. We venture to hope that your Majesty will be guided by but one sentiment—that of humanity.

The undersigned, representing the religious, political and judicial, economic and social authorities of the Belgian people, hope that your Majesty will give the necessary orders to cease deporting Belgian workmen and to repatriate those who have been driven into exile.

They offer to your Majesty their respectful homage.

Brussels, February 14, 1917.

Signatories:

Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines, Primate of Belgium.

Ministers of State—Viscount de Lantsheere, Baron de Favereau, J. Devolder, Count Woeste.

Relief and Victualing Committee—M. Ernest Solway, president.

Senate—Baron de Favereau, president; Baron d'Huart, secretary; Viscount de Jonghe d'Ardoye, quaestor; Alexander Braun, Max Hallet, Prosper Hanrez, Em. Vinck.

Chamber of Representatives—Alphonse Harmignies, vice president; Mansart, secretary; Xavier de Bue, quaestor; Bertrand, Michel, Levie, Paul Van Hoedgarden, du Bus de Warnaffe, Fulgence Masson Wauters, Franck, Emile Tibbaut, P. Wauwermans.

Court of Appeal—Eug. Dupont, first president; Georges Terlinden, procurator general.

The Bar—Edmond Picard, batonnier de cassation; H. Botson, batonnier d'appel.
National Bank of Belgium—L. van der Rest, vice governor.
Society General of Belgium—Jean Jadot, governor.
Prince de Ligne.
Count Jean de Merode, Grand Marshal of the Court.
Count John d'Oultremont, Honorary Grand Marshal.
Baron Hermann de Woelmont, Grand Master of the Household.
Count Leo d'Ursel.
Count Jacques de Liedekerke.
Viscount de Parc.
Baron Goffinet, Grand Master of the Household of Her Imperial Majesty the Empress Charlotte.

A copy of the appeal to the Emperor, to which was appended certain documentary evidence consisting of reports, statistics, etc., was handed in to the Governor General, together with the following letter:

Brussels, February 14th, 1917.

The undersigned have had the honor to address to his Majesty the Emperor of Germany an appeal, a copy of which is annexed to the present letter.

They did not deem it necessary to join to this document the evidence inclosed herewith, which in their opinion supports it. But they desire that this evidence should be in the hands of your Excellency in order that you may, if you judge opportune, or if his Majesty expresses the desire to have it laid before him, to communicate it to him.

Accept, sir, the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(This letter was signed by the same persons as the petition to the Emperor.)

On March 9 Baron von der Lancken transmitted orally to Baron de Favereau, President of the Senate, the answer given by the Emperor to the petition of the Belgian notables. He declared that his Majesty had decided to have minutely examined the demands contained in the appeal addressed to him, reserving to himself the giving of a defi-

nite decision. Meanwhile he had given orders to send back to Belgium persons deported by mistake as unemployed and to suspend till further orders the transfer into Germany of Belgians unemployed.

The deportations ceased after this and little by little the unhappy men, who had been taken away by force into Germany, were able to return to their country. The lamentable condition in which they were found on their return proved to the hilt what privations and sufferings they had gone through. A large number, exhausted by the hardships inflicted on them in forcing them to work, had to be looked after in the hospitals. The Cardinal made his voice heard once again in favor of these victims of German barbarity in a letter addresed to Baron von der Lancken, in which he pleaded the cause of various condemned persons.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
April 28th, 1917.

To Baron von der Lancken.

Dear Baron—M. Merjay, residing at 161 Rue de Culture, Brussels, son of Lieutenant General Merjay, has just been condemned to death by Charleroi tribunal. Since the war began he had lost his wife, one of his sons had fallen in battle, another had become prisoner. The Merjay family is eminently honorable and Christian. The new Governor General * would bring honor on himself by using clemency toward the condemned man.

You will perhaps remember that last January you gave me hope of the release of the Dean of Orp-le-grand, M. Herman, who then had undergone half his sentence. The month of May will soon be here and the poor dean † is still in his cell at Siegburg. He has already completed nearly a year and a half of his sentence. Cannot his last six months be remitted?

It is a traditional practice for the Archbishop to consecrate his Suffragans. Thus I was invited to consecrate the

* Baron von Falkenhausen had succeeded in the capacity of Governor General Baron von Bissing, who died April 18th, 1917.

† M. Herman had been condemned for having helped young men to cross the frontier.

new Bishop of Ghent on Tuesday, May 1, and joyfully accepted the invitation. And now a pass to Ghent is refused, though I had in my request for a permit indicated the whole of my itinerary. But all these personal grievances I put up with without protest.

In return, may we not hope that the German authorities will lean more toward clemency? Will you not use your influence to bring them to this way of acting? I deem it my duty to remind you of the delays made in repatriating our workmen; of the lamentable condition in which they return to us—a clear evidence of the treatment they have undergone. The war will not last forever. You who see things from a broader point of view than the militarists should make them understand that they can have no interest in arousing against them the indignation of all right-thinking men on the day conditions of peace are discussed.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

In his reply to the preceding letter, Baron von der Lancken examined the different cases mentioned therein, but passed over in complete silence the Cardinal's protest against the manner in which the repatriation of the deported was carried out.

Political Department of the Government General of Belgium, Brussels. *May 1st,* 1917.

I. 3575.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

I have duly received your esteemed letter, dated April 28th. I have the pleasure to be able to answer your Eminence that a few days ago the Cure Herman, of Orp-legrand, received a remission of the rest of his sentence. The case of the Abbe Allaer has not yet been settled, but I have every reason to expect a satisfactory solution.*

As regards the Merjay case, I have not yet been able

*The Abbe Allaer had been sentenced to eight months' imprisonment for having helped Monsignor Legraive in showing hospitality to a Frenchman on his way to the frontier.

to take any steps, owing to the change of Governor General. The illness and death of Baron von Bissing have not allowed me till now to attend to the favor you ask for in your letter of April 12th on behalf of Burgomaster Dessain. I must confess that it will be very hard to obtain authorization for him to go to Switzerland. In cases of this kind which have occurred before, the released prisoners, especially Batonnier Theodor, took up on foreign soil an attitude which was not of a kind to encourage the German authorities to continue in this course.

Your Eminence also makes the remark that you were unable to assist at the consecration of the new Bishop of Ghent. The responsibility for this must not be laid to the charge of the German authorities. For my part, I would have done all I could to facilitate the journey to Ghent both for your Eminence and for the Bishops of Liége and Namur. For this it would have been needful to put off the consecration for a few days. As, however, the new Bishop pleaded urgency and declared that he would be satisfied with the presence of Bishops living close at hand in the war zone, it was not possible to give effect to the reasons brought forward by your Eminence to justify your presence at the consecration, nor to obtain the traveling permit asked for, in view of the more stringent regulations which had been lately adopted.

(Signed) LANCKEN.

CHAPTER XXXII

BARON VON DER LANCKEN AGAIN ACCUSES CERTAIN PRIESTS OF HAVING MISUSED THEIR OFFICE OF PREACHING

Political Department, Government General of Belgium, Brussels. November 3rd, 1916.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

I must again thank your Eminence for the trouble you have taken to make certain modifications in the text of your pastoral, prior to its being read in the churches. To prove how right we were in regarding certain passages as dangerous, I think it enough to quote the following instance: At Brussels a Capuchin father added to the passage referring to the independence of Belgium certain comments, which your Eminence manifestly did not anticipate. He said: "England has again guaranteed our independence."

I would again beg your Eminence to direct your particular attention to what is going on at the Grotto of Lourdes, at Laeken. True, these sermons contain no direct attack on the occupying power, but preachers often choose topics, such as, e. g., "Joshua and the 300 Warriors," which prove beyond doubt their intention to poison the minds of their hearers against Germany. Such proceedings are bound to have consequences. I think that your Eminence could prevent by a simple admonition the deplorable results of this course of action.

As a sequel to information received by us, an inquiry was set on foot about certain reprehensible remarks made in the church of Cureghem by the curate Egidius Davidts. By order of the Governor General the inquiry was suspended, but his Excellency Baron von Bissing would be grateful to your Eminence if you were to call the curate to order in accordance with ecclesiastical law.

Lastly, I should like to communicate the following to your Eminence: A proposal was made to the Governor General to limit the number of candles used on the occasion of the feast of All Saints, owing to a lack of material used in their manufacture. The Governor General is loth to meddle in religious matters. In view of the scarcity of wax he leaves your Eminence to take whatever steps the interests of public worship may require.

I believe that the Viaene case has been settled according to your wishes. The judicial formalities to be gone through in a case of this kind, the collecting of all the documents, etc. . . . always take up some time, in consequence of the press of work at the offices where these matters are dealt with.

I offer to your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) LANCKEN.

His Eminence answered the accusations of the chief of the political department by putting him on his guard against arbitrary interpretations placed on words used in the pulpit. Baron von der Lancken had at the beginning of his letter thanked the Cardinal for making some slight modifications in the pastoral, "The Voice of God." The Cardinal answered, as he already had done in his recent interview with him about this matter, that this spontaneous concession could not be looked upon as an acknowledgment of the occupying Power's right to censor any document issued by him as Bishop.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
November 5th, 1916.

To Baron von der Lancken, Chief of the Political Department, Government General, Brussels.

Dear Baron—I have duly received your esteemed letter I. 10387, dated November 3rd, for which I thank you.

I will set on foot without delay an inquiry into what happened out of the ordinary in the churches of Cureghem, Laeken (Lourdes Grotto) and in that of the Capuchin Fa-

thers at Brussels. On my side, let me ask you again to be wary of arbitrary interpretations of words uttered by preachers. Thus the alleged words attributed to a Capuchin Father, quoted in your letter, "England has guaranteed Belgium's independence," are they not capable of an innocent interpretation and is not that one which we ought to adopt? I have not as yet been able to get information as to the sermon you complain about, but I understand very well that one might say—precisely to avoid what on another occasion you called a prophecy—we have a sure guarantee, given us by the treaty of London, that European peace will not be concluded so long as Belgium has not recovered her independence.

I do not regret having suppressed the three passages of my pastoral which have particularly offended the Governor General, though without reason in my opinion. I suppressed them willingly because you were kind enough to declare that you put no obligation upon me. I wished to prove to you thereby not only that I am anxious to spare those trouble who devote themselves to my service, but also that I know when my conscience allows me how to sacrifice my own personal views in order to avoid a dispute.

To safeguard the rights of my conscience I made a great point of telling you that my free concession was not to be interpreted as the acknowledgment of a right of the occupying Power to watch over or censor my Episcopal acts or writings.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

CHAPTER XXXIII

NATIONAL CELEBRATIONS IN THE CHURCHES

On November 15th, the King's name-day, a high mass, followed by the Te Deum, was sung in several churches, among others at St. Gudule, and at St. Jacques-sur-Coudenberg. On the pretext that some members of the congregation had, on coming out of the church, sung the "Brabanconne," and raised shouts of "Long live the King," "Belgium forever," "Liberty forever!" the town of Brussels was punished by General Hurt, Governor of Brussels and Brabant. According to an order dated November 20, all public establishments were to be closed at 8 p. m. and the inhabitants were forbidden to frequent the streets between 8:30 p. m. and 4 a. m. The penalty was not abrogated till December 19th.

On the occasion of these incidents, Baron von Bissing addressed to the Cardinal the following letter:

Government General of Belgium, Brussels,
November 25th, 1916.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

Your Eminence is aware, I suppose, that on the 15th inst. solemn religious services held in the Churches of St. Gudule and St. Jacques were made an occasion for political demonstrations which were afterward continued in the streets. The Governor of Brussels and of Brabant has had to punish the population of Greater Brussels.

Your Eminence assuredly cannot be blind to the fact that the principal cause of these incidents is to be found as usual in the playing and singing of the National Anthem. It is inevitable that the enthusiasm of the crowd should be roused and excesses committed. Since, as a general rule, the organ

gives the signal for the singing, the responsibility of all that happened falls on the ecclesiastical authorities. Since demonstrations of this kind may lead to serious trouble, I cannot in future adopt the same tolerant attitude as I have done up till now. I must also mention, on this occasion, the use of flags inside the churches. People are no longer content with decorating the altars with flags, but they have begun to unfurl and wave them. If in the future incidents like those which have happened at Brussels are brought to my notice, I shall have to leave to the judgment of your Eminence the advisability of celebrating or not solemn religious services on anniversary days.

I am informed that more than a year ago your Eminence gave instructions to your clergy limiting the introduction of secular rites into religious services to those cases only provided for by the liturgy. For the aforesaid reasons I have asked myself whether I ought not to prohibit the playing or the singing of the National Anthem and other nonreligious melodies, and if I ought not to restrict the use of flags in churches to memorial services held for the fallen in battle. Before issuing any order of the kind, I solicit your Eminence's advice.

(Signed) BARON VON BISSING,
Lieutenant General.

The Cardinal's answer is as follows:

Archbishop's House, Malines,
November 29th, 1916.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—The letter I. 11.319, with which your Excellency has honored me under date 25th November, calls my attention to "political demonstrations" alleged to have taken place in certain churches.

I have at heart as much as anybody the dignity of public worship and respect for holy places. So recently as last Sunday I opened my address in the Church of St. Gudule with these words: "Brethren, I beseech you earnestly to remain recollected in the House of God, both during and

after the service." My words were heeded. Neither by gesture nor by word of mouth was the decorum of the ceremony disturbed.*

I feel confident that the few parishes where an abuse may have crept in will observe a similar recommendation, such as I shall deem it my duty to make them.

For my own part, I beseech your Excellency to be on your guard against deliberately or undeliberately exaggerated reports sent you. For instance, I do not know whether there be in reality one or several churches where the clergy would indulge in flag waving. I have made no inquiry about the two cases of St. Gudule and St. Jacques, the only two which your Excellency's letter mentions by name. But a person of high standing, a stranger in Belgium, who assisted at the religious service on November 15th, of his own accord, informed me that he was very surprised that the German authorities should have used, in describing this ceremony, the word "demonstration."

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

Baron von der Lancken, acting on the order of Baron von Bissing, acknowledged the Cardinal's letter of November 29th and called attention to a new case, in which, according to him, the Cardinal's people had taken part in a political demonstration in a Brussels church.

Political Department of the Government General, Brussels.
December 15th, 1916.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

His Excellency was pleased to hear that your Eminence would make it your duty to send an admonition to the clergy of those parishes where abuses have crept in.

Quite lately people have again made a political demonstration in a Brussels church. In the middle of the singing a Belgian flag was unfurled and waved before the altar;

* On Sunday, November 2, mass was said at St. Gudule for the intention of those deported. The Cardinal made an address in which he inveighed against the crime of deportation and proclaimed that violated right remains right and that injustice resting on might is none the less injustice.

then it was carried all round the church in a kind of torch-light procession. All the time the "Brabanconne" was played on the organ in a very lively and ostentatious way.

Such cases fall within the scope of the orders which have been drawn up against political demonstrations organized in public and consequently render those participating in them liable to legal proceedings. It is impossible not to hold the cure responsible for any breaches of the law in his church. Your Eminence knows how distasteful it is to the Governor to take steps against priests, and he, therefore, earnestly desires the ecclesiastical authorities to take the needful measures to avoid their recurrence.

(Signed) LANCKEN.

The Cardinal asked Von der Lancken for details and took advantage of this opportunity to intercede in favor of some persons detained under peculiarly cruel circumstances.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
January 16th, 1917.

To His Excellency Baron von der Lancken, Chief of the Political Department, Government General, Brussels.

Dear Baron—For a long time I have wanted to revert to the Governor General's esteemed letter, dated November 25th, 1916, in which he complained of certain demonstrations, unseemly beyond all reason, which, according to reports made to him, took place in several Brussels churches. In this letter his Excellency mentions the singing of the "Brabanconne," national flags being unfurled and waved, and other secular melodies rendered in church, etc. He invited me to prohibit them, to save him the trouble of forbidding them himself. I have received information from reliable sources and have not succeeded in finding a single church, either in Brussels itself or in the surrounding district, where the above-mentioned abuses are or were prevalent. I am aware that Baron von Bissing is absent and that is the reason why I have put off till now the present correspondence; but possibly he took you into his confidence be-

fore leaving and you would therefore be in a position to specify the churches he had in view.

I embrace this opportunity of bringing to your notice certain events you are interested in, or in which you would be perhaps willing to interest yourself.

The chaplain of Luttringhausen prison induced Canon Loncin to petition for the remission of the last three months of his sentence; Canon Loncin writes to his family that his appeal has been rejected.

Again, M. l'Abbe Herman, cure and dean of Orp-le-grand, a venerable priest of sixty-three years of age and an invalid, has undergone, first at Rheinbach, then at Wahn (Rhld) thirteen months' imprisonment for humane acts which every man who is not absolutely heartless and, still more, every priest devoted to his country was obliged to perform; you had raised my hope of his release and even the Holy Father deigned to interest himself in his case. So far the wretched captive has, so he informs me, not a gleam of hope. Shall I be compelled to tell him that he must serve the remaining nine months of his sentence? The Abbe Bernaerts, too, who is so indispensable for his parish and the social work of which he was director at Antwerp, is still interned. I endeavored to visit him on the 7th inst., but was denied access to the prison. You will remember that a woman of mysterious character, certainly without a search-warrant, examined in the presence of an officer Abbe Bernaert's confidential papers—an incident I have already brought to your notice. May I ask you whether the inquiry has been fruitful of results?

You must have heard that the mayors and leading citizens of several communes in the province of Antwerp are interned at Malines, because some workmen in their respective communes have evaded deportation. Among those interned is an old man of eighty. I do not wish to reopen the discussion of deportation itself for the present, but, the temperature being what it is, can you, in the name of humanity, justify the detention in an icy cell of a venerable octogenarian?

But there is something else even more inhuman than

this. A poor woman named Madame Wilputte, who is about to become a mother—according to the doctors within the next fortnight—is lodged in the cavalry barracks in Malines, and notwithstanding her condition the local authorities have made known to her their intention to have her carried off to Germany immediately.

Is such conduct conceivable? Can you do nothing to put a stop to it?

Please receive the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

The chief of the political department contented himself with replying as follows:

Political Department of the Government General of Belgium, Brussels. *January 17th,* 1917.

S. No. I. 597.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your esteemed letter of the 16th inst. The Governor General will still be away for some time. Nevertheless, I am able to give the desired information about the patriotic demonstrations which were made in churches. The incidents mentioned in the Governor General's letter, dated December 15th, occurred on December 3rd at St. Mary's Church at Schaerbeek. During the 11 o'clock service a procession was formed inside the church in which the Belgian flag was carried around. This ceremony was repeated in the same church on January 7th.*

These particulars will suffice to guide your Eminence in seeking supplementary information. I should like, however, to add that if these demonstrations continue, their authors must not be surprised if they incur severe penalties, for it is a proved fact that the leniency we have hitherto shown has given rise to an increase in ceremonies of this kind in church, the tendency of which is obviously political.

* These so-called demonstrations consisted in a procession which took place regularly inside the church on the first Sunday of each month. Even before the war the national flag figured prominently therein.

As I am on the point of going on a journey for a few days, I am sorry I can give your Eminence no exact information as to the other matters dealt with in your letter. I hope, however, to be able to obtain the necessary authority for you to visit Abbe Bernaerts. Moreover, I have taken certain steps in favor of the Cure Herman and the Malines people under arrest, and on my return I shall be able to give your Eminence fuller details.

Please receive the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) LANCKEN.

N. B.—I have just this moment heard that the leading Malines people who were arrested with a view to their undergoing an urgent examination have been set at liberty.

CHAPTER XXXIV

REMOVAL OF CERTAIN APPARATUS FROM THE ST. LAMBERT'S TECHNICAL SCHOOL

THE German authorities, not content with despoiling the Belgian factories of all their machinery, went so far as to carry off certain tools used in the instruction of apprentices at St. Lambert's Technical School, Malines.

As soon as he became aware of this new encroachment on the rights of private property, the Cardinal commissioned one of his vicars general to lay a protest against this unjustifiable act of commandeering before the competent German military authority, but he was too late, for on the arrival of the Cardinal's delegate the material was already loaded in railway wagons labeled for Germany.

The Cardinal hastened to complain to Baron von Bissing in these terms:

Archbishop's House, Malines,
December 11th, 1916.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—I have the honor to inform you that this morning an engineer, engaged in the Rateau works at Muysen-lez-Malines, advised me that thirty-nine engineer's twin vises, forming part of the apparatus of St. Lambert's Technical School, were commandeered by a German officer.

St. Lambert's Technical School is a free school, under the patronage of the Archbishop of Malines. It trains workmen, ironworkers among others, who attend a practical course, in a section reserved for them at the Rateau works, using tools and other apparatus made by their own hands. I at once sent one of my vicars general to protest against the

taking away of these tools and to insure their retention for the use of our apprentices. When my delegate arrived the iron vises were already loaded in trucks, at the station at Muysen, and tomorrow they will be dispatched to Germany.

The officer, Lieutenant Buehler, had already gone back to Antwerp, but the vicar general called at his office in the afternoon and asked him to postpone their dispatch. The lieutenant excused himself on the plea that he was obliged to obey orders.

I have ventured to place these facts before your Excellency in the firm conviction that you will admit my claim by restoring to our young workmen equipment doubly dear to them, because it is not only forged by their own hands, but also insures them a means of livelihood.

Accept, sir, the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

Baron von der Lancken received orders from Baron von Bissing to reply to the Cardinal's protest. He made no attempt to justify the commandeering of engineer's vises and even implicitly acknowledged the illegality of the proceedings taken by the military authorities. Moreover, he declared that the occupying power would do its best to repair the damage done to St. Lambert's school.

Political Department of the Government General of Belgium, Brussels. *December 15th,* 1916.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

As soon as I was informed over the telephone by Mgr. de Wachter, Auxiliary Bishop, of the removal of engineer's vises from St. Lambert's School, I exerted myself to the utmost to settle the matter. The next day the Governor General, after perusing your letter, seemed very anxious to comply with your request. It has not, however, been possible to prevent the transport of the articles in question, but the Governor General has given orders to return as many vises to St. Lambert's School as have been taken away.

According to information received, only three of the

vises belonging to the school were parallel or twin vises; the others were of the common type. I am sorry to have to warn your Eminence, however, that the parallel vises will be very hard to restore; the stock with which we are going to replace them will not comprise this special kind.

I offer to your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) LANCKEN.

The assertion that the military authorities had only taken away three parallel vises was untrue. Moreover, Baron von der Lancken himself acknowledged as much in a letter to Mgr. Legraive, the auxiliary bishop. "It was my mistake," said he, "when I said that all the vises requisitioned were not parallel vises."

In spite of the Governor General's promises, the articles taken away were never either replaced or paid for by the Germans. The school, at its own expense, had to purchase a new stock.

CHAPTER XXXV

REQUISITION OF COPPER

AN order of the Governor General dated July 8, 1916, ordered the compulsory declaration of all existing stocks of copper, tin, nickel, bronze, or gun-metal in occupied territory.

By a new order of December 30th all household articles made of tin, brass, copper, etc., were seized and had to be made over, the date of delivery being fixed later on for each district. Any one contravening the order was liable to penalties not exceeding five years' imprisonment and 20,000 marks fine.

As soon as these orders came into force, the Cardinal wrote Baron von Bissing as follows:

Archbishop's House, Malines,
February 14th, 1917.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—The official gazette of laws and orders of July 8th, 1916, announces that the military authorities are thinking of commandeering all existing copper, tin and nickel in occupied territory. We could not bring ourselves to believe that the occupying power would ever resort to such measures; but now an order of December 30th confirms that of July 8th and we learn that these regulations are now being enforced.

From the moral and religious point of view adopted by me by reason of my duty as bishop, I respectfully make your Eminence a dual request:

First. That you will not regard as guilty those who in their conscience believe that they cannot actively lend a hand in carrying off the commandeered metals.

Second. That you would kindly take into account that, according to canon law, the goods of religious communities, seminaries, episcopal colleges, as well as those of the "fabriques," are ecclesiastical property and therefore cannot be alienated without the Sovereign Pontiff's sanction.

To be fair, I must inform your Excellency that I can neither co-operate myself nor allow those under me to co-operate in the alienation of these goods.

Receive, sir, the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE GOVERNOR GENERAL REQUESTS THE CARDINAL TO RESTRICT THE CONSUMPTION OF COAL IN THE CHURCHES

Political Department of the Government General,
Brussels, February 9th, 1917.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

Your Eminence is not unaware that at the present moment a great dearth of coal is making itself felt. As the weather continues to be bitterly cold, it is needful for this fuel to be everywhere used with the greatest economy, so the government has taken steps to limit the consumption of coal. As regards fuel economy, those churches which are heated must fall into line with the rest. The Governor General requests me to draw your attention to this matter and leaves it to you to judge what steps you think ought to be taken so that the coal restrictions imposed upon everybody in the public interest may be complied with.

Please receive the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) LANCKEN.

The coal shortage was due solely to the German requisitions, for, as the Cardinal showed in his letter of November 2nd to Baron von Bissing, reproduced later on, the wartime output of the Belgian mines, had it been left at the disposal of the people, would have admitted of the distribution of approximately three tons of coal a year to each of the population. But the greater part of the output was commandeered by the German Government, which, in order to secure a supply of gold, sold it to neutral countries at a handsome profit. Meanwhile the Belgian people—for the common good, said Baron von der Lancken—had to deprive themselves of fuel during the most intense cold.

Among the steps mentioned by the chief of the political department in his letter to the Cardinal, we must note the closing of all educational establishments through lack of heating power.

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE CARDINAL'S PASTORAL LETTER, "COURAGE, BRETHREN!"

THE Cardinal's Lenten Pastoral for the year 1917, beginning, "Courage, brethren," was read in all the churches of the diocese on Sunday, February 25th.

It was divided into two sections. In the first the Cardinal dilated upon the moral greatness of the nation; he did homage to the valor of the army and the prisoners, the patience of the refugees, the firmness of the Government and the undaunted courage of the King. "If," said he, "there were some dark clouds in the sky, they would dissolve in the course of history and allow nothing to shine forth but the moral beauty of the nation, its glowing patriotism, its staunch resolve. The grand lessons of military heroism and patriotism given by the Belgian people would serve to educate the mind of generations to come."

In the second section the Cardinal dwelt on the grandeur of the Christian spirit. "If natural moral virtues be worthy of esteem, charity alone, which Christ infuses into the soul, gives virtue its full significance and strictly speaking merits eternal reward."

The Pastoral ended with an exhortation to confidence and acts of adoration and love of God, and of submission to His holy will.

Baron von Bissing, considering that the Cardinal had again issued a political manifesto, wrote him as follows:

Government General of Belgium, Brussels,
February 27th, 1917.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

On the 25th inst. your Eminence ordered a Pastoral to be read in all the churches, a whole chapter of which is

taken up with purely political matters. I must raise a vigorous protest against the abuse which has been made of the liberty of worship, hitherto accorded, in order to promote a political agitation. By issuing this manifesto, directed against the occupying power, your Eminence has again sadly disillusioned me of the hope I was justified in forming, in view of the repeated declarations of the Holy Father. If, after this incident, I refrain from taking serious measures it is solely because of my regard for the Holy See and for the sake of religious peace in occupied territory. For an action of this nature a simple priest, according to the orders now in force, would render himself liable to legal proceedings. Nor can I refrain from expressing to your Eminence my surprise that you should issue a public manifesto of this kind at the very time when, in common with a certain number of well-known personages in the occupied territory, you have just addressed an appeal to his Majesty the Kaiser in the interests of the unemployed. This act of your Eminence deters me from promising, as I have done, my support to the above appeal.

Receive the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) BARON VON BISSING,
Lieutenant General.

The Cardinal hastened to justify his conduct by asserting that his duty was to encourage, lead and support his beloved people struggling in the midst of the most cruel sufferings.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
March 3d, 1917.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—The letter I. 1799, with which your Excellency has honored me, under date of February 27th, only reached me yesterday, March 2d, and I avail myself of my first leisure moment to answer it.

May I beg your Excellency to be so good as to abstract for a moment from your position as a soldier and the chief representative of the occupying power to hearken to those

feelings which cause a responsive echo in the heart of every Christian and thrill his very soul? I do not ask more than that in order to rest assured that you will not hold fast to your first decision.

Be so good, Excellency, as to look the facts in the face. Just as Our Holy Father Benedict XV, in his consistorial address of December 4th, 1916, proclaimed so nobly before the Church and before the world, considerable numbers of inoffensive citizens are dragged from their mothers, their wives and their weeping children and led off into captivity far from their native land. We have seen them go dejected in mind, though sound in body, and we have seen them come back wizened, emaciated, a prey to tuberculosis in the proportion of six to ten, thus creating a dire menace for generations to come.

Every family is in dread. Tales of sorrow come to us from every side, and how can we in face of this remain unmoved witnesses of our beloved people's anguish? No, Excellency, a power which only took count of exterior discipline might make this claim. A man with a heart would not uphold it.

I regret having to raise my voice in public at a moment when people are speaking about the generous efforts displayed by your Excellency to prevent fresh deportations and to mitigate the effects of those already carried out—at a moment when I had just signed a confident appeal to his Imperial Majesty. But it is needful to take account of the complex situation created for us by events. We are face to face with a power which has at its disposal the means of might; but around us are a people weak, agonized and suffering; we have to respect the one without neglecting the other. I am ready, with God's grace, for every personal sacrifice, but one cannot ask a shepherd to take no interest in his flock. It is inconceivable that he should see it dispersed and hear its cries without trying, at least, with the poor means at his disposal, to prove that he still leads them and that he will not forsake them.

Would your Excellency kindly read again with an impartial eye my Pastoral of February 11th? You will find

therein nothing but the expression of sentiments of kindly solicitude. I have no intention of wounding any one whatever, nor of being aggressive. I merely confine myself to encouraging a people who are dear to me and of whom I am, by my vocation, the leader and mainstay. The faithful understand me; my words incite no one to rebellion, whereas in the case of many I know it has brought them peace of mind.

Accept, sir, the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

Baron von der Lancken, having in the course of an interview with Mgr. Legraive, complained of the Pastoral, "Courage, My Brethren," the Cardinal wrote him as follows:

Archbishop's House, Malines,
Louvain, March 6th, 1917.

To Baron von der Lancken, Chief of the Political Department, Government General, Brussels.

Dear Baron—You were so kind as to inform me through his Lordship, Mgr. Legraive, that, thanks to your pressing instances, Mlle. Douterlinge will escape capital punishment. I rejoice with the family and thank you for your kind and effective intervention.

In the course of your interview with my Auxiliary Bishop it appears that you passed severe judgment on my last Pastoral and expressed annoyance at a letter addressed by me to a club of young Frenchmen. On this last point you have been led astray, for I have not written either to any young men's club or to any French newspaper.

As regards my Pastoral, you must be acquainted by this time with the correspondence on this topic exchanged between the Governor General and myself. I cannot expect you to tell me that you are satisfied with my answer, but you cannot deny that in forming a judgment about the meaning or expediency of my Pastoral, we must look at it from two points of view—that of the occupier and that of the unfortunate people whose territory is occupied.

You must acknowledge that the military power of Germany could not have conceived anything more opposed to its longing for peace than the forcible and woeful deportations, which have aroused universal indignation.

Accept, dear Baron, the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

Baron von der Lancken could think of nothing better to justify the action of the occupying power than to appeal to wartime necessities:

Political Department of the Government General,
Brussels, March 9th, 1917.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

Your Eminence's esteemed letter, dated the 6th inst., has duly come to hand. I did, as you say, discuss with Mgr. Legraive your last Pastoral and your letter published by the Parisian press. As regards this last, I take the liberty to send your Eminence an extract from the "Vingtieme Siecle." According to this, the letter was not addressed directly to the "Revue des Jeunes," but to one of its staff of writers.

I only revert to the Pastoral in order to pass a criticism on the remark made by your Eminence that we must distinguish between the occupying power and the occupied country. The occupied country will understand many things done by the occupying power, if it makes an attempt to appreciate the latter's point of view. It will then realize that the occupying power has to take count of the necessities of war imposed on it, and that it by no means acts in an arbitrary manner. The occupying power will, of course, look upon all criticism of its administration as unwarranted, if no account be taken of the circumstances.

I offer to your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) LANCKEN.

Inclosed with this letter was the following extract from the "Vingtieme Siecle," dated February 24th, 1917:

AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER OF CARDINAL MERCIER

Undaunted Loyalty of French and Belgians Under Hardships

The "Revue des Jeunes" will publish tomorrow the following letter which one of its correspondents has just received from Cardinal Mercier:

Archbishop's House, Malines,
January 15th, 1917.

Dear Sir—Mr. X—— has furnished me with a tangible proof of your kindness toward myself and my suffering flock. I appreciate it greatly and I thank you for it. Indeed, Belgium is being sorely tried and the sufferings of the populations of northern France are not less keen. But, thank God, our courage does not flag. Our people, I mean the lower classes, they who have to bear the brunt of privations, are wonderful for their steadfastness. This week I went through the byways and alleys of a little town—Lierre—which the invaders had already looted in August, 1914, and from which they had just kidnapped 1,000 able-bodied men. I went from house to house to see the families of the deported. I had to dry many tears and to comfort many in sorrow. I have heard hard words about the tyrants who brutally smash up our homes, but I have not heard either a wife or a mother asking for peace at any price. We suffer, but we abide our time. Victory, reparation and necessary guarantees are what we count on. The Americans in charge of the feeding of the French populations report that your own people are animated with the same generous sentiments. With you, this spectacle is less surprising, as a Frenchman is temperamentally and traditionally generous. Historically he is the embodiment of warlike valor and of chivalry, whereas with us, who have enjoyed a long spell

of peace and possess a less sanguine temperament, the intense loyalty shown during the last two years amazes us and inspires us with a sentiment, perhaps childishly exaggerated, of self-admiration.

You will understand and excuse this feeling, at all events in the case of the bishop, the father of his flock, and if I make much of it, it is to explain the comfort you have given me by your kind thoughtfulness.

I pray God to reward you for it, to bless you and yours and the noble French nation, and I offer you, sir, the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

CONDEMNATION OF MGR. LEGRAIVE, AUXILIARY BISHOP OF MALINES, AND OF M. L'ABBE ALLAER

On the finding of the court-martial at Antwerp, Mgr. Legraive, Bishop Auxiliary of Malines, was condemned to nine months' imprisonment for showing hospitality to a young Frenchman on his way to the frontier, and Abbe Allaer to eight months as an accomplice. The Cardinal learned of these sentences on his way through Brussels, after a few days' absence. He discovered at the same time that Baron von der Lancken, through the Nuncio, had advised him to ask for Mgr. Legraive's reprieve. Accordingly, he at once sent in an appeal to the Governor General of this tenor:

St. Louis's Institute, Brussels,
March 17th, 1917.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—In returning this evening to Brussels after a few days' absence, I learn to my amazement that the court-martial sitting at Antwerp has just sentenced Mgr. Legraive, my Bishop Auxiliary, to nine months' imprisonment.

I feel that your Excellency will mercifully quash this sentence, the more so because I happen to know that the act was inspired, as Mgr. Legraive avers, by motives of charity. I hope also that the Abbe Allaer, spiritual adviser to the seminary, who has been sentenced to eight months' imprisonment, will experience similar leniency.

Accept, sir, the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

The next day the Cardinal begged for permission to visit Mgr. Legraive at Antwerp:

Archbishop's House, Malines,
March 18th, 1917.

To Baron von der Lancken, Chief of the Political Department of the Government General, Brussels.

Dear Baron—I am very anxious to visit this afternoon his Lordship Mgr. Legraive in prison. Would you kindly procure me the necessary authority to do so or warn the governor of the prison by telephone? I will arrange to be at Antwerp between 4 and 5.

Accept, sir, the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

A few moments after sending this letter the Cardinal learned that Mgr. Legraive had already been sent to Germany. He expressed his surprise to Baron von der Lancken:

Archbishop's House, Malines,
March 18th, 1917.

To Baron von der Lancken, Chief of the Political Department of the Government General, Brussels.

Dear Baron—Yesterday, on my arrival at Brussels, I learned that his Excellency the Nuncio was urging me, on your advice, to send in a petition for the reprieve of Mgr. Legraive, my Auxiliary Bishop. And this morning I learn that yesterday Mgr. Legraive had already arrived in Germany. I have tried in vain to account for the coincidence.

Accept, dear Baron, the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

Three days later Mgr. Legraive, having received a reprieve, returned to his country after spending forty-eight hours in the camp at Siegburg. The Cardinal hastened to thank Baron von Bissing for his intervention.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
March 21st, 1917.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—At this very moment Mgr. Legraive returns to us from Germany. The reprieve granted him is the result of your prompt and powerful intervention. I am only doing my duty in expressing to you how grateful I feel and at the same time I offer to you the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

The Cardinal also thanked Baron von der Lancken for the share he had had in releasing Mgr. Legraive and asked him to use his influence to obtain the Governor General's clemency on behalf of Abbe Allaer.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
March 22d, 1917.

To Baron von der Lancken, Chief of the Political Department of the Government General, Brussels.

Dear Baron—I have heard of the large share you had in the speedy release of Mgr. Legraive and I hasten to thank you. The joy of the seminarists at the return of their venerable and beloved president knew no bounds. The clergy and myself are still very much concerned because Abbe Allaer was not able to return with his companion in captivity, while his aged mother is pining away in her loneliness. But we still hope that the Governor General's clemency will soon reach this worthy and deserving priest.

I take the liberty of confiding to your care the inclosed letter addressed to the Governor General.*

Accept, my dear Baron, the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

*The Cardinal asked in this letter for the repatriation of twenty-two deported people.

Baron von der Lancken replied in these terms:

Political Department of the Government General,
Brussels, March 23d, 1917.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

I am greatly obliged to your Eminence for your acknowledgment of my efforts to effect Mgr. Legraive's release. If Abbe Allaer is to be set at liberty it would, at least, be necessary to draw up a regular petition. I leave it to your Eminence to write in this sense to the Governor General.* For my part I am not in a position, unfortunately, to take any new steps. I have sent on to the Governor General your Eminence's two letters, dated January 22d, the one to thank him for the reprieve of Mgr. Legraive, the other asking for the repatriation of twenty-two deported persons. Applications dealing with each individual case were not inclosed with the letter. I beg your Eminence to send them to me, since the Governor General is disposed to support your appeal.

I offer to your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) LANCKEN.

*Abbe Allaer was not released until the beginning of June.

CHAPTER XXXIX

DEATH OF BARON VON BISSING

In the morning of April 11th the adjutant of Count von Bismarck, Kreischef of Malines, called on the Cardinal in the name of the chief of the political department, with official intimation of the death of Baron von Bissing, which occurred in the evening of the previous day. On receipt of this communication the Cardinal wrote Baron von der Lancken the following letter:

Archbishop's House, Malines,
April 19th, 1917.

To Baron von der Lancken, Chief of the Political Department of the Government General, Brussels.

I am very much affected by your kind attention and wish to express my gratitude. Baron von Bissing was a believer; I remember he said one day in unmistakable accents: "I am not a Catholic, but I believe in Christ." I shall pray to our Lord in all sincerity for the repose of his soul.

Accept, sir, the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

CHAPTER XL

BARON VON FALKENHAUSEN SUCCEEDS BARON VON BISSING —FIRST RELATIONS OF THE CARDINAL WITH THE GOVERNOR GENERAL

On April 24th Baron von Falkenhausen was nominated in the place of Baron von Bissing. A prudent intermediary expressed to the Cardinal his wish to know whether he wanted to enter into personal relations with the new Governor General. In view of the then existing state of public feeling, his Eminence considered that an exchange of visits would not be expedient. Upon this Baron von Falkenhausen commissioned the chief of the political department to announce officially to the Cardinal his nomination to the post of Governor General and to assure him that he would be ready at all times to insure liberty of worship to the Belgians.

In reply to this official announcement, the Cardinal sent the following letter to Baron von Falkenhausen:

Archbishop's House, Malines,
May 10th, 1917.

To His Excellency Baron von Falkenhausen, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—I must thank you for your Excellency's kind forethought in announcing to me officially, through the kind offices of Baron von der Lancken, your appointment to the Governor Generalship of Belgium. But what particularly gratified me is the assurance you gave in that letter, that religious liberty would be always effectively protected in Belgium and that your Excellency would do your best to safeguard it.

I am intrusting this letter to my Vicar General, Mgr.

Van Roey, who will deliver it personally at the Government House and reiterate to the delegate of your Excellency the expression of my thanks and sincere esteem.

Please accept the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

CHAPTER XLI

THE CARDINAL RECOMMENDS TO BARON VON FALKENHAUSEN THE RELIGIOUS INTERESTS OF WORKMEN AT THE MALINES ARSENAL AND OF PERSONS DETAINED ON SUSPICION

Archbishop's House, Malines,
May 12th, 1917.

To His Excellency Baron von Falkenhausen, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—Emboldened by your Excellency's expressed wish to protect the religious interests of our people, I should like to recommend to your solicitude the workmen of the central works at Malines. I refrain from speaking of the conditions under which these workmen have been engaged at the arsenal. But the Bishop of the diocese has been saddened to find that it has been made morally impossible for these poor workmen, who for the most part belong to Christian families, to hear mass on Sundays. Not only are they deprived of their Sunday's rest, but their work begins at 6 a. m.—too early for the first mass and only ends at noon, too late for the last masses. I have also the honor of calling your attention to the spiritual destitution of people detained on suspicion. As long as their cases are in process of investigation they are precluded from assisting at mass and are thus hindered from fulfilling their religious duties and deprived of their chief spiritual consolation. I may mention that the internal arrangements of our prison chapels are such as to effectively prevent all intercommunication between the prisoners. I will be obliged to your Excellency for your favorable attention to both these petitions.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier.

The Governor General replied through the chief of the political department that he would institute an inquiry into the points raised by his Eminence.

When the inquiry, which lasted more than a month, was concluded, Baron von der Lancken informed the Cardinal that his request had been granted, so far as circumstances would allow. As a matter of fact, things remained more or less in *statu quo*.

The Cardinal, while thanking Baron von der Lancken for the paltry concessions he had obtained, again insists upon receiving adequate satisfaction. He complains, at the same time, of the vexatious measures to which he is subjected by the Government General.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
July 19th, 1917.

To Baron von der Lancken, Chief of the Political Department, Government General, Brussels.

Dear Baron—My Vicar General has had the honor to give you a provisional answer to the letter which you were good enough to write me on the 10th ultimo. Nevertheless, I must revert to the subject matter of your correspondence because I attach great importance to it and, thanks to your gracious intervention, do not despair of ultimately obtaining redress.

You are kind enough to inform me that, from a religious point of view, an improvement has been effected in the prison regime. Though I must confess I do not exactly perceive in what this mitigation consists, yet I am glad the lot of the prisoners has been softened and thank you for the efforts you have made to bring it about.

As regards the Malines arsenal, you allege that even before the war work was in full swing and went on without interruption even on Sundays. In this I am obliged to say you have been misinformed, for it is only since the occupation that the workmen have been deprived of their liberty to assist at mass.

I am very grateful to you for having obtained for them one free Sunday out of four; but the fact remains that on the other three Sundays of the month they are compelled to work, and the government withholds facilities for performing their religious duties. The earliest masses are said at 6:30; they go on, together with the sermon, until 7:15,

whereas, according to the regulations, the workmen are obliged to sign on at the arsenal at 7 a. m. Thus hundreds of workmen are precluded from obeying the dictates of their conscience.

Your government plumes itself on making the fulfillment of their religious duties compulsory on every one in your army. Why then refuse the Belgians what you command Germans to do?

You appeal to pressure of work. Really, if instead of opening the gates of the arsenal at 7 a. m., you were to open them at 9 a. m., do you think work would suffer seriously? Is it not already enough that our poor workmen are forced to exhaust their strength every day of the week in the service of their enemies?

I said, Baron, that you have been misled by the people commissioned to inform you. Does not the incident brought to my notice yesterday supply an additional proof? I have not expressed to anybody my intention of going to St. Gudule's on the 21st of this month. I decided on the contrary, several weeks ago, to sing the Te Deum in my cathedral, and I have informed the Metropolitan Chapter of my decision. The author of the report which annoyed you has therefore invented his story in every detail, and it is upon reports of this nature that the German Headquarters are disturbed, threaten, fix their decisions, etc. . . . !

Can you not put an end to this irritating procedure?

Again, on the 12th instant, after the funeral of the late lamented M. Scholaeert at St. Gudule's, I lunched in the strictest privacy with a friend. Just as I was taking my seat again in my carriage, I was amazed to see a group of about twenty people of the lower classes prowling about just outside the house. Their presence was accounted for by two armed sentries, who were lying in wait for my exit and spying on my movements. I saw these two sentries with my own eyes, and bearing arms, too!

Is this meant for a joke? But if some day the joke becomes a tragedy, who is to be made answerable for it?

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER.
Archbishop of Malines.

CHAPTER XLII

THE CARDINAL'S ATTITUDE TOWARD PARTITION OF ADMINISTRATION

THE German Government, wishing to break up Belgian national unity, included in its program of reconstruction in Belgium a regime of administrative separation.

This work of disintegration was begun in November, 1916, by doubling certain branches of the service in the Ministry of Science and Art, thus creating two classes of officials, whose duty it was to control education in the Flemish and Walloon provinces, respectively. To pacify the minds of the officials in charge, the German civil administration informed them that the question was but one of internal order and had nothing to do with separatist administration.

On March 23d, 1917, the occupying power threw off the mask. By way of fulfilling the promise made by the Imperial Chancellor some weeks previously to the members of the traitorous "Conseil des Flandres," who had gone to visit him in Berlin, he had an order published according to which Belgium was to be divided into two administrative districts, the first with its headquarters at Brussels, the second at Namur. On receiving this news, Belgian national feeling was deeply stirred and numerous protests were made to the Governor General by prominent persons in the country.

Senators and deputies belonging to all parties met and deliberated on the attitude of passive resistance they ought to take toward the order of March 23d. Some of them considered that all officials in the central administration ought to resign; others went so far as to recommend the resignation of all officials, even purely local ones, magis-

trates, mayors, teachers, etc. The opinion which prevailed and to which in the end the members unanimously assented was that only the highest officials of the central administration should resign and that lower officials should be free either to resign or remain at their posts.

The Belgian Government, on being consulted, explicitly approved of this modified solution, urging, however, the officials of the exchequer to delay their resignations for the time being.

The occupying power was not slow in taking steps against refractory officials. On the pretext that in withdrawing the declaration of loyalty, which they had signed at the beginning of the occupation, and refusing to continue giving their services they were setting up active resistance against the carrying out of legal provisions, the government had them deported to Germany.

The Cardinal made an energetic protest to Baron von Falkenhausen against these flagrant violations of international law and The Hague convention.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
June 6th, 1917.

To His Excellency Baron von Falkenhausen, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—Since the beginning of the occupation of Belgian soil by armed force, the representatives of the Imperial Government fully understood that the administration of our country had to be organized in conformity with international law.

To the various classes of officials forming part of the civil administration, Baron von Bissing, basing his action on The Hague convention, addressed an invitation, whose burden, if we prescind from the variants of diction, was as follows for all of them:

"Do you agree to fulfill under my general administration the offices you held under the Belgian Government? Not otherwise than my predecessor, Baron von der Goltz, I do not ask you to lay on one side your national spirit; rather, I appeal for your co-operation in the public interest.

You will continue to receive your salaries out of the Belgian treasury for which I am temporarily responsible, under one condition: that you undertake to fulfill your duties loyally and to do nothing which would militate against the German administration of the occupied provinces of Belgium."

On this occasion several men engaged in government work submitted a case of conscience to the religious authorities for solution: Could they without detriment to their patriotism and loyalty toward the legitimate government yield obedience to a foreign administration? This was a thorny and delicate question.

At the first sitting of The Hague conference (1899), the delegate sent by the Netherlands Government, M. Van Karnebeek, declared that "he resented the introduction of any clause which appeared to empower, either directly or indirectly, the officials of an invaded territory to place themselves at the disposal of the conqueror." Nevertheless, the conference took a broader view of the matter. It quite realized that were certain officials to remain at their posts in invaded territory, they would frequently perform their duties much better, at least, morally speaking, toward the population.

Notwithstanding this, both at the Brussels conference in 1874 and The Hague conference in 1899, the official representatives intrusted with the task of drawing up a code of international law, laid great stress not only on the claim of officials to liberty of action, either in resuming their duties when the occupying power invites them to do so or in declining to resume them, but also on the liberty of resigning after having once agreed to resume the various duties.

I would invite your Excellency to read over again Article IV of the Brussels conference of 1874 and the protocols of the same conference and you will find there, supporting the liberty of officials, the explicit declarations of M. Beernaert and Baron Lambermont, for Belgium; M. Landsberge, for Holland; M. Vedel, for Denmark, and Colonel Staaf, for Sweden and Norway. I appeal to the testimony of neutral countries, as they are indisputable arbitrators of international law.

I would also invite your Excellency to read through again the protocol of The Hague conference of 1899 and the Rolin report, which is an authentic commentary on the articles voted by this conference. Your Excellency would see that the conference unanimously denies "the right of the occupier to constrain directly or indirectly any class of employés of the occupied state to resume their duties."

Seeing that the Government General in Brussels at the end of the year 1914 sheltered its invitation to the public officials in Belgium behind The Hague convention, I formed my conscience according to its provisions and answered my harassed inquirers:

"The contract submitted for your signature prior to your engagement includes nothing which compromises your consciences on the score of morality or religion or loyalty to your country. You may, therefore, sign it without forfeiting either your honor or your patriotism. Your services contribute, indeed, toward the national weal. I do not doubt that the Belgian Government, were it possible to consult it, would ratify your acceptance. You are not, therefore, wanting in loyalty. As regards the engagement you are required to enter into, 'to undertake nothing against German administration in the occupied territories,' it commands you to respect both public order and the regulations needful to maintain it. None of you has the intention to break them. But if some day the conditions of the contract submitted for your acceptance were to change their character, you would always be free to repudiate it. Both natural and international law confer as well as guarantee your liberty in so acting."

What was but a surmise in 1914 is now unfortunately a fact.

The decree concerning separate administration, which tends to throw the whole of the administration into confusion and to break up our national unity, places the state officials in a situation which many of them believe offends their self-respect and wounds their consciences. They are thus within their rights in resigning their posts.

Do not let the lawful exercise of a right be punished either with exile or imprisonment. The regulation attached

to Article 43 of The Hague convention of October 18th, 1907, stipulates that, save where absolutely impossible, the occupying power must respect the laws in force in a country. Nothing hinders the occupying power from respecting the civil organization of our general administration.

The questions of Belgian home politics concern Belgians alone and cannot be solved except by the Belgian Parliament or Government or by the King of the Belgians. Your Excellency must be badly informed respecting the reasons why the various public officials resigned their posts. When you have seen as in a brighter and nobler light the attitude of these courageous men, rather than proceed against them with vigor you will add your voice to that of every self-respecting man to pay them homage for their prudence and disinterestedness. I say their prudence advisedly because they prefer to take refuge in a positive refusal—*non serviam*—rather than act in secret to the prejudice of an administration they can no longer loyally serve; to their disinterestedness, because they have laid the sacrifice of their own interest and the safety of their hearths and homes on the altar of their country.

I beg of you to hearken to the voice of those who know intimately the Belgian people and their history, when they affirm that no violence will ever triumph over their patriotism.

Receive, sir, the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

The Governor General confined himself to answering that he declined to discuss with the Cardinal any questions other than those of a religious character.

The Holy See, through the medium of the Nuncio, manifested a desire to be accurately informed as to the attitude of the Belgian episcopate toward the administrative separation imposed on Belgium by the occupying power. The Cardinal complied with this request in a long and

detailed letter addressed to his Holiness Pope Benedict XV.*

Malines, August 5th, 1917.

Most Holy Father—I regard it as my duty to give to Your Holiness exact information as to the attitude of the Belgian episcopate toward the measures the occupying power has decreed in order to accomplish what it terms "administrative separation."

In reality it is not with measures of administration that we have to deal, but with an attempt to effect national disruption. No one doubts this in Belgium and no one outside Belgium will have any doubt of it after the publication of the late Baron von Bissing's "Denkschrift" or Memoirs. In it our former Governor General lays bare his hope that in flattering the crude aspiration of a few ardent Flemings of a separatist frame of mind Germany will, on the one hand, ultimately succeed in detaching them in affection and perhaps also in fact from the Walloon part of the population, and on the other hand will hinder their withdrawal from under the hegemony of the German Empire. Belgians have come to the conclusion that they must oppose by all legitimate means this anti-national policy, while the almost complete unanimity of the Flemings as well as the Walloons, embracing Belgian citizens of every party, whether in the occupied or unoccupied parts of the country, have rallied around their King and Government.

The Belgian episcopate has considered that it ought not to be last in the ranks of those who do their duty, while for my part I have not only in private conversations, but also first at a deans' meeting, a second time at a meeting of the rectors of episcopal colleges, and a third time at a meeting of the masters and mistresses of the training schools, clearly declared what is our patriotic duty and at the same time what our Christian conscience dictates in such a contingency.

In a Pastoral issued by me long before the war—on the

* This letter was read by the Cardinal in the course of a retreat preached to the clergy at the beginning of September and was taken down by one of the retreatants and published in "Cinquante Mois d'Occupation Allemande" by L. Gille, A. Coms and Delands-Herre, Brussels, 1919, Vol. III, pp. 412-418.

feast of the Epiphany, 1910, to be precise—I said that patriotism, which, following St. Thomas, I called patriotic piety, is binding in conscience to such an extent that to fail therein in serious matters is to commit a grievous sin.

Taking my inspiration from this principle, I declared to the deans that anybody countenancing these attempts to break up our national unity would be a traitor to his country, and to the directors of the seminaries and episcopal colleges I added that I forbade our seminarists and young students to take part in such partisan meetings, where, under cover of what they term activist propaganda, the King, as well as the religious authorities, is insolently attacked.

While we were issuing these general directions to our clergy the occupying power multiplied its separatist efforts to attain its own ends. At the outset it proceeded slowly and stealthily. But so early as November, 1916, it duplicated certain posts at the Ministry of Sciences and Art, intending thereby to introduce a twofold set of officials, classified in two categories, namely, Walloons and Flemings. But to soothe the consciences of those concerned, the German commissary formally declared that it was only a matter of internal economy special to the teaching services and by no means the beginning of a separatist administration for the whole country. In the city and district of Brussels and in the great towns of the Flemish provinces numerous families of Walloon extraction or of French customs give their children a partly French education. Various steps were taken to forbid this bi-lingualism. At last, on March 23d, 1917, the Governor General threw off the mask and decreed the partition of the Belgian administration into sections, one Flemish and the other French, and created a separate central bureau for each of them.

These measures are contrary to Article 43 of The Hague convention of October 18th, 1907, and are an infringement of our constitutional liberties in the matter of language. Until now the functions of the central administration were carried on by delegates of the lawful authority under the supervision of the occupying power. For the future there will be no central authority of national origin.

The occupying power, in order to lead everybody outside Belgium to believe that this dual organization has the approval of one part of the nation, usurps the rights of the whole nation, and so well does it know this that it has tried to effect this change by resuscitating the hateful and grotesque comedy of the Council of Flanders.

The staffs at the ministries, mindful of the loyalty they owe the Belgian Government, were prepared in great numbers to resign their posts rather than lend a hand to a policy of national scission.

Some persons, nevertheless, foreseeing reprisals at the hands of the occupying power, and more anxious to protect the private interests of officials' families or to safeguard certain party advantages than to preserve intact the supreme interest of national unity, would have advised all the staffs to humor the whims of the occupying power in order to avoid a greater evil. These two opinions were submitted to the government at Havre, which substantially replied as follows: "The higher officials ought to resign; the lower may remain at their posts." Immediately the directors general and the secretaries general of all the ministries complied with the wishes of the Belgian Government and were, just as was expected, led away captive to Germany.

The occupying power thought itself capable of checking the exodus of the staffs by taking these violent measures, whereas all with very rare exceptions risked their family position and their liberty with a lofty disinterestedness that one could not but admire. The logical sequence of these events was that a fresh question arose, viz., what was to be done respecting the new dualist arrangement? Were we to treat with it, obey, or oppose it with passive resistance?

Opinions were again divided; some deemed it best to break with rather than appear to recognize this new situation; to close the colleges, the training and private schools. The majority, and I sided with these, refused to proceed to extremes at the first onset. The Belgian Government itself gave the example of moderation, by not demanding from all officials equality of sacrifice. Duty called for a

protest against a separatist administration, but practical life is made up of obstacles unsurmountable by formal logic. In consequence, we decided to leave the primary schools open in order not to consign our children to vagabondage, but we proceeded to draw up a protest in the case of the colleges and training schools for elementary teachers.

There are in Belgium free normal schools, official normal schools, communal and provincial schools and state normal schools. There is, moreover, a central state board before which those who have not followed a regular course in the normal schools may appear.

In the normal schools not belonging to the state a state delegate has the right to assist at the final examination and the certificates receive governmental approbation by a stamp being affixed to them.

Now we decided after consulting the masters and mistresses concerned that the final examinations would take place as usual at the end of the scholastic year, but in private; that is to say, without inviting the German officials to assist at them and without submitting the certificates for their signature.

We subsequently carried our decisions into effect quietly, unostentatiously and liberally. We anticipated the withdrawal of the subsidies granted to the normal schools by the state as well as the scholarships awarded to the scholars in subsequent years. What would happen to these schools? What would the parents say? All these questions were looked squarely in the face by those present at the meeting convened by us. They were peaceably solved in that spirit of national loyalty inspired by the motto: "Do thy duty, God will do the rest."

A mistress of the normal school in Flemish Campine stated that she needed an annual sum of 15,000 francs to pay the salaries of her lay mistresses. All her school children belonged to Flemish families of the lower middle class. We were for the moment certain that the Belgian Government would in its turn legalize the certificates of our private boards and pay us the grants which the Germans might refuse, yet we had not absolute certainty. This particular

mistress contented herself with saying: "Providence will provide." Yes, Providence will provide. It has provided. In fact, M. Poullet, our Minister of Science and Arts, wrote us congratulating the head teachers on their courageous attitude, promising that the certificates granted should be legalized on his return and the financial deficit met. The parents have raised no objection to this and the scholars with only one or two exceptions have approved.

As soon as this decision was arrived at, I informed the official authorities responsible for the management of the normal, communal and provincial schools, and without hesitation they adopted our way of thinking and followed the same line of action as ourselves. In the state normal schools nobody could prevent the Germans from setting up a board to their liking. The board was set up, but the scholars themselves refused to appear before it.

Our last remaining resource was the central board. Each pupil of our private schools had the right to present himself before it. By establishing a board of an official character on our premises we would actively have co-operated in realizing the German plan; by permitting our pupils to go before a central board we should not assume any direct responsibility. It was, therefore, taken for granted that parents would decide whether or not it was expedient to present their children before this board, while we on our part stood aside. The central board was likewise a fiasco.

Lastly, the certificates granted by the heads of colleges and schools on the completion of humanities had to be ratified by the central administration at the Ministry of Education. It was decided that these certificates should not, as was customary, be sent collectively to the Ministry, but that each individual pupil concerned could demand his certificate for himself and hand it in to be officially stamped. As a matter of fact no certificate was asked for or forwarded to the German central authorities.

One can easily understand that after such a success, the organizers of separatist administration were disconcerted, disappointed and annoyed. But they only have themselves to thank if after three years of tyrannical government they

have not yet formed even a vague idea of the psychology of the Belgian people. All things considered, it is our duty to render the annexation of Belgium as difficult as possible for the Germans.

I know quite well that all the neutrals do not share our opinion. It would have been so convenient for us to protest verbally and so save our principles, then bow our necks under the yoke in order to spare ourselves trouble. The same sentiments were voiced at the time of the infamous and brutal invasion of our territory by a military power before which we were fated to succumb. Belgium chose sacrifice. It is her glory in the sight of God and in the verdict of history. Confronted with the recent acts of administrative perfidy, Belgium could easily have silently acquiesced and could later have sent an academic protest to the authorities of the German empire. But this policy is not according to the temper of our people. The Belgian does not love what savors of convention; he prefers deeds to words, but, at the same time, knows the value of moderation.

In fact, the attitude of the nation in this question of separatist administration, "the gravest," said a diplomat to me, "that the Germans have raised since they first oppressed under the pretense of ruling us," the attitude of the nation has been admirably moderate, that is to say, marked with calculated energy. Our temporary rulers had need of rare audacity in taxing us with sedition, when our conduct was so moderate in its resistance and so high-spirited in its refusal to submit.

The truth is, the occupying power uses its resources to the utmost limit to drive us to desperation, and is amazed at not succeeding. We yield neither to cajolery nor to frightfulness, but during three years we have never once attempted an act of open rebellion. It is precisely this calm self-possession that the Prussian militarist fails to understand.

While they venture to lodge complaint against our lack of respect for their bureaucratic regulations, they continue their deportations in the war zone, and, contrary to the

highest authorities, they obstruct repatriation. Nine whole months, beginning on November 11th, 1916, have now gone by and thousands of inoffensive Belgian citizens reduced to idleness through the calculated disorganization of our industries have suffered hunger, anguish, exhaustion in exile. By dint of wearing down their physical powers the Germans end by extorting a mere external consent to a system of compulsory labor their soul abhors, and then by distorting this forced acquiescence into a free act they enroll them in the list of voluntary workers, a class they are not bound to restore to their homes. Is this not odious enough? But let no one any longer trust in their sincerity when they announce under certain conditions of lamblike mildness and with the silent approval of occupied Belgium the termination of deportation.

All the world knows that spies in the service of an enemy military power are punishable with death and we do not think of blaming the Germans for putting down real spying. But when ignorant, simple people count the trains that pass through their village station and then at the end of the week send the total number to a comrade who is foolishly believed to be in correspondence with the English army, when they are found boasting of their prowess in the conviction that they have saved their country, is it not criminal to condemn them by batches of eight, twelve or eighteen on a charge of espionage? And when out of a list of fifteen suspects of this kind three are pardoned, or two out of twenty, who are sent as a matter of course to penal servitude for life, ought one to reckon it mercy or cruelty?

I am coming to the end of this long account, most Holy Father, but it was needful to make it complete or else risk a misunderstanding.

I omitted to state that the Belgian hierarchy is unanimous in condemning separatist administration and "activism." In regard to this, the sentiments of all are known to me and I can assure you they are unanimous.

In taking practical steps it is ordinarily very difficult, if not absolutely impossible, for us to act in concert. Ques-

tions arise unexpectedly and demand instant solution. Journeys are very tiresome and slow, and intercourse by sealed letters impossible. With the Bishops of Ghent, Bruges and Tournay all communication is severed. I can only keep in correspondence with my colleagues of Namur and Liége. The moment the problem of education boards for the normal schools arose I sent a messenger to expound my views to these colleagues. The Bishop of Namur agreed with me at once, the Bishop of Liége hesitated chiefly for local reasons. At Liége, in fact, the liberals wanted either a radical clear-cut solution or submission to the decree, and the Bishop justly feared lest masters and mistresses trained in the neutral (irreligious) schools should fill the vacancies created in the free (religious) schools owing to absence of certified teachers trained in our colleges. At Ghent examinations had already begun when the question was raised in the provinces of Brabant and Antwerp, but the Bishop expressed to me later on his keen regret that he had not known earlier the line of action which had been adopted. The Bishop of Tournay informed me of his own accord of his adhesion. At Bruges I do not know what happened, but as this town is being constantly subjected to bombing attacks, I imagine that studies and examinations receive only slight attention. I may add that even at Liége the bishop must have left much liberty to the training colleges, for several, according to what I hear, did not hold any legal examinations.

In the name of our suffering country, in that of the Belgian episcopate and in my own, I respectfully thank Your Holiness for your fatherly care of us. I thank you for the quite special apostolic blessing which you have deigned to bestow on me and on dear Belgium through Cardinal Gasparri, and I beg you to renew in spirit this blessing for which we are always the more eager in proportion as our cross becomes heavier, and I place at Your Holiness's feet the homage of my most profound veneration and of my ardent filial duty.

Your Holiness's most humble and obedient servant,
(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

CHAPTER XLIII

ARREST OF CANON VRANCKEN, THE CARDINAL'S PRIVATE SECRETARY

Archbishop's House, Malines,
June 3d, 1917.

To Baron von der Lancken, Chief of the Political Department, Government General, Brussels.

On my return to Malines yesterday evening I had the joy of finding the Abbe Allaer released. I know the part you have taken in securing his liberation and I hasten to thank you. On the other hand, I was exceedingly grieved to learn that my private secretary, Canon Paul Vrancken, had been summoned to appear before the Antwerp court-martial on Wednesday and that the military prosecutor had asked for a year's imprisonment.

You know, no doubt, the charge brought against Canon Vrancken. In a sermon preached at Malines on Whitsunday he mentioned the heroic conduct, known to every one, of the twenty-three young men, who, on the appeal of the curate of St. Leger and with him, offered their lives to save those of the twenty-four fathers of families seized as hostages in August, 1914, and sentenced by the German military authorities to be shot.

Many persons present at the sermon bear witness that the orator did not utter a single offensive word either against the German army or the occupying power. I have seen him this morning in his cell. He is the soul of uprightness and he assures me that he had no aggressive intention. His arrest has amazed him.

He is too valiant in suffering to desire an appeal for mercy, and in spite of the paternal affection I feel for him, I refrain from making one to the Governor General.

But I feel I must call your attention to the following consideration: The action of the curate of St. Leger and of the twenty-three young men of his club is, morally speaking, so admirable that it will henceforth form a page of universal history. It is inscribed forever in the annals of mankind.

Only think of the stigma which would rest forever on the name of your people should historians have no alternative but to add that for having paid his tribute of admiration to these young heroes, a Catholic priest had to suffer imprisonment and exile.

Accept, Baron, the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

In spite of his Eminence's intervention, the Very Rev. Canon Vrancken was convicted and deported to Germany, where he was detained until hostilities were terminated.

CHAPTER XLIV

THE CARDINAL ACCUSES THE OCCUPYING POWER OF IGNORING RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY—HE AGAIN INSISTS ON OBTAINING PERMISSION TO SEND BELGIAN PRIESTS TO INTERNMENT CAMPS IN GERMANY

Archbishop's House, Malines,
July 19th, 1917.

To His Excellency Baron von Falkenhausen, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—In your letter of the 13th ult. your Excellency was good enough to write me that you were inclined to meet the wishes of the Belgian episcopate in church matters whenever such are brought to your notice. On the other hand, you insist on determining the limits of the jurisdictions proper to the ecclesiastical and political authorities.

On this point I am in agreement with your Excellency, with this reservation, however, that questions bearing on the moral order cannot be alien to episcopal jurisdiction and consequently cannot be removed from my care.

It is from the moral point of view that I have expressed an opinion on certain measures taken by the occupying power and formed a judgment as to the attitude adopted by certain Belgian officials toward it.

On the other hand, the occupying power ignored the spiritual authority of the diocese in an incident which occurred lately, and I beg your Excellency to kindly do me justice.

A nun, of German extraction—Sister Celine—of the Convent of the Poor Servants of Mary Immaculate, Rue Boduognat, 19, Brussels, lodged a complaint with the German authorities against her superioress and sisters in re-

ligion. It concerned certain difficulties regarding the internal order of the convent and ought consequently to have been brought before our tribunal.

My curia adopted an attitude of great condescension toward the German administration and showed special favor to Sister Celine by placing her, at the request of Baron von der Lancken,* in the Ursuline Convent at Haecht, where the superioress is a German. In spite of these conciliatory proceedings on our part, the German tribunal summoned to appear before it the superioress of the Convent of the Poor Servants of Mary Immaculate and condemned her to two years and nine months' imprisonment; Sister St. Pierre was sentenced to two and one-half months' imprisonment, and finally Sister St. Paul to eighteen months' imprisonment.

Notwithstanding the fact that Sister Celine was received into her community out of charity and without a dowry, the German authorities have compelled the superioress of the convent in the Rue Boduognat to pay the German superioress at Haecht 2,000 marks toward Sister Celine's maintenance.

I beg the Governor General to quash this judgment and to transfer Sister Celine's case to the ecclesiastical court of the Malines diocese. As it rested with the ecclesiastical authorities to remove Sister Celine, in case this were found to be expedient, I beg the Governor General to refund the 2,000 marks to the superioress of the Poor Servants of Mary Immaculate, and to leave to the same authority the task of determining the conditions of Sister Celine's maintenance at Haecht or elsewhere.

I am forced to add that if I do not obtain satisfaction I regret I shall have no alternative but to refer the matter to the Holy See, for it is my duty to see that canon law is respected. I would also direct your Excellency's attention to another matter.

While your predecessor was still at the head of the

*Baron von der Lancken wrote Monsignor Legraive, asking him to transfer Sister Celine from the convent of the Rue Boduognat to the Ursuline Convent at Haecht.

government in Belgium, I was pained to see two of my young priests, the Revs. Van Roy and Van Bergen, rebel against my authority. Without having sought the permission of their ecclesiastical superiors, they deserted their posts, visited offices of your administration, where they obtained permission to pass into Germany. We have learned from newspaper articles that they have entered into relations with a group of enemies of Belgian unity and have received passports for Gottingen.

These two refractory priests, suspended by their Bishop, are exercising their ministry contrary to canon law at Gottingen.

I demand earnestly that this abuse be brought to an end.*

I tried by every means in my power to get your predecessor to grant, and the Holy See has deigned to make repeated applications to Berlin to obtain, permission for Belgian priests, in communion with their bishops, or at least Dutch priests, to exercise their ministry for the benefit of our countrymen.

All these efforts have been met by an obstinate refusal on the part of the German authorities. Only priests who are at loggerheads with their bishops enjoy the favors of the Empire in Germany.

In the interests of ecclesiastical discipline, on the one hand, and of our countrymen interned in Germany on the other, I beg your Excellency to be so kind as to bring the Revs. Van Roy and Van Bergen back to Belgium and to authorize the Belgian bishops to send their countrymen, whether soldiers or civilians, interned in Germany, priests speaking both our national languages who retain the confidence of their superiors.

I offer you, sir, the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER.

* These two priests have since then acknowledged their fault and expressed their deepest regret for having disobeyed the Cardinal's orders.

Government General of Belgium, Brussels,
P. A. I. 5653. *July 26th*, 1917.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your Eminence's esteemed letter of the 19th inst., which reached me on the 20th (the original is erroneously dated 19th). I am glad to note therein that your Eminence wishes to confine your relations with the occupying power to purely ecclesiastical matters. Further on your Eminence reminds me that in my letter of June 13th I said that in what concerns church interests I would always take into consideration the requests made to me. On the strength of this assertion you ask me to withdraw orders, in issuing which certain of my subordinates are alleged to have been guilty of unjustifiably tampering with matters concerning the internal economy of the church.

To this charge I venture to answer that:

First. No German authority has "constrained" the superioress of the Poor Servants of Mary Immaculate to pay 2,000 marks for the maintenance of Sister Celine at the Ursuline Convent at Haecht, and if such an order had really been made, I would hasten to withdraw it. But your Eminence has been misinformed, and I cannot regard as purely ecclesiastical the fact that three French nuns have been punished for possessing and propagating noncensored publications and also for having insulted the Germans. Offenses against the common law committed by ecclesiastics fall everywhere within the competence of the ordinary courts.

Second. As to the case of the two priests, Van Roy and Van Bergen, who are exercising their ministry in German internment camps, your Eminence, having entered into negotiations with the German ecclesiastical authorities, I have abstained entirely from interfering in this canonical dispute and will accept without question, so far as I am personally concerned, whatever decisions may be come to.

On this occasion your Eminence again expresses the wish to obtain leave for the bishops to send Belgian priests

into Germany. I am ready as my predecessor was to do what I can in this way, but the decision in this matter rests with the Berlin war office, to which is intrusted the supreme control of all internment camps.

I offer to your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) VON FALKENHAUSEN,
Lieutenant General.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
August 1st, 1917.

To His Excellency Baron von Falkenhausen, Governor General.

Sir—In your esteemed letter of the 26th ult., you are good enough to renew the expression of your desire not to tolerate abuses of power which would encroach upon the prerogatives of religious authority, and according to the interpretation you give the facts I have called to your attention, the occupying Power has no cause to reproach itself with any unwarrantable interference. This interpretation needs to be clearly defined:

First. According to your Excellency, the superioress of the Poor Servants of Mary Immaculate has not been constrained (gezwungen) to pay a pension of 2,000 marks to the superioress of the Ursulines at Haecht for the maintenance of Sister Celine. I conclude that in your Excellency's judgment, as in reality, the arranging of the pension for a nun passing from one convent to another is a domestic concern, pertaining exclusively to the management of religious communities. Moreover, I conclude that the diocesan authority has full freedom to determine as it likes the amount of pension to be paid to the superioress of Haecht for the said nun. If I have misunderstood you, I beg you to put me right.

Second. It goes without saying that German justice would not summon nuns to its tribunal and condemn them without seeking to justify its interference. You bring forward prohibitions (verboten) and personal conversations offensive to Germans. At this rate there is not a single

Belgian family the members of which are not liable to arrest.

The fact against which I must continue to protest is quite simple. A German nun, instead of bringing her complaints, if she had any worthy of consideration, about petty domestic squabbles to the notice of the diocesan authorities, addresses herself to an incompetent tribunal merely to annoy her superiors and sisters in religion.

The tribunal, instead of referring the plaintiff to her ecclesiastical superiors, intervenes, judges and condemns. I hold that this is an abuse of authority, such that no pretext can rob it of a name which out of regard for your feelings I refrain from uttering.

Third. As regards the sending of priests speaking our two national languages to interned Belgians, I beg your Excellency to obtain for me a definite answer, a plain yes or no.

During three years I have pleaded the exercise of liberty of conscience for these unfortunate men, condemned to confess to a priest who, even if he were a saint, brings back to their minds the memory of an enemy. The Holy See has deigned to take my appeal under his august protection. As a matter of fact, the representatives of the Empire invariably meet our every effort with the answer that they are going to take steps, Schritte . . . unternehmen. Meanwhile we are no better off than we were before.

I beg the competent authority to make known to us once and for all whether or not it will allow us to send Belgian priests in communion with their bishops to help our countrymen.

If it answers in the affirmative, it will thereby supply proofs of its respect for religious liberty and we shall thankfully hasten to the aid of our abandoned brethren.

But in case of a negative reply, I would ask your Excellency to no longer allow censored Flemish newspapers of the extremist section (flamingant) and certain dishonest individuals hiding behind their German protectors both at Gottingen and here full liberty to calumniate me by alleging that if Flemish prisoners in Germany are deprived of

Flemish confessors and preachers, it is only because Malines has an Archbishop who is an enemy of the language and indifferent to the religious needs of the Flemish people.

I have reason to believe that a letter treating of confidential ecclesiastical affairs, addressed to the head chaplain of the German army in Berlin, has not reached him. Will your Excellency allow me to send him a copy in a sealed envelope and yourself insure its safe arrival at its destination? I shall be exceedingly obliged if you will do me this favor.

Accept, sir, the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

Political Department of the Government General of Belgium. *Brussels, August 17th,* 1917.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

The Governor General, after reading your Eminence's letter of the 1st inst., told me that he did not intend to answer it himself. I have just come back to Brussels. On my return his Excellency drew my attention to the necessity of dealing in detail with certain points raised by your letter and this I hasten to do.

First. As regards Sister Celine's pension, the Governor General has already declared to your Eminence that no German authority has compelled the superioress of the Poor Servants of Mary Immaculate to contribute 2,000 marks toward Sister Celine's maintenance in the Ursuline convent. According to further information received, we have nothing to add to this declaration.

Second. In this same letter of July 26th the Governor General already observed that the prosecution of the sisters of the Congregation of Mary Immaculate could in no wise be looked upon as an encroachment on the domain of religion by the civil power. The sisters were convicted for infringements of German decrees, viz., one sister for having retained and circulated noncensored publications and for insulting Germans, another for insulting Germans, and a third

for being in possession of and circulating noncensored publications, for insulting Germans and having no identity card.

These are misdemeanors and well within the province of the civil tribunal and not of the ecclesiastical authorities. Offenses against the common law committed by ecclesiastics are everywhere judged by ordinary tribunals.

Third. As regards the appointment of Belgian priests to internment camps in Germany, obviously we could only admit those priests who, in our judgment, could be trusted not to bring any anti-German influence to bear upon the prisoners. The choice of these priests could, therefore, not be left exclusively to Belgian bishops; it would have to be made in agreement with the competent German authorities. If no solution of this problem can be reached, the special care of the prisoners must be left exclusively in the hands of German priests. There is nothing extraordinary in this, for neither in France nor in England are religious services for German prisoners intrusted to priests sent from Germany. Besides, the spiritual interests of Belgians interned in Germany have not hitherto been neglected; they have always been attended to in a satisfactory manner.

Fourth. Your Eminence believes that a letter addressed by you to the head Catholic chaplain of the Prussian army, Doctor Joppen, of Berlin, has not arrived at its destination. It must be noted, however, that as a sequel to a letter from your Eminence, the head chaplain has sent the Governor General a detailed report on two Flemish priests. The presumption is that the said letter is the one your Eminence has in view and which therefore has been duly received. It is not possible for the Governor General to transmit the sealed letters you forwarded to him to their addresses.

I offer to your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) LANCKEN.

CHAPTER XLV

THE GOVERNOR GENERAL THREATENS TO SEIZE THE CHURCH BELLS

A RUMOR had become current throughout occupied Belgium that the military authorities were about to seize church bells. Without waiting for the official publication of an order to this effect, his Eminence, in conjunction with their Lordships, the Bishops of Namur and of Liége, expressed his fears to the Governor General and protested beforehand against sacrilegious acts, such as would be committed by seizing the bells.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
September 9th, 1917.

To His Excellency Baron von Falkenhausen, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—For some time past a rumor has gained currency among the people, giving rise to a very keen and painful impression on all sides. There is a question, they say, of removing the bells from the churches.

Our first impulse was to pay no attention to this rumor, especially as it appeared to have little foundation in fact, in view of the solemn assurances we had from time to time received from the German authorities, that during the time of occupation the rights of the church would be respected. But certain events give us cause for anxiety, especially the seizure of bells in the war zone No. 1 in occupied France; the taking away of bells used for civil purposes in certain districts of Belgium, and lastly a bell which was used for worship has just been violently carried off from Magoster-lez-Laroche, without the local authorities being advised or warned that this would be done. This

last act, the result, no doubt, of a mistake, was at once reported to the military Governor General of Luxemburg by the diocesan authorities of Namur, as being formally contrary to the decree of December 13th, 1916, according to which objects belonging to churches and other buildings or places used for ecclesiastical purposes are exempt from seizure and delivery.

These incidents, Excellency, do not shake our confidence, but they fill us with apprehension and will serve to justify our addressing you a collective letter today to demand protection for the rights of the church and ecclesiastical property—a protection to which Article 46 of The Hague convention entitles us.

We fear lest the prolongation of the war may some day threaten with danger the weighty interests of religion and Christian art, of which we are the natural guardians. We hope the German authorities will listen to our appeal. We conjure you to intercede with the higher command of the army, should the need ever arise. It is superfluous to repeat to your Excellency that it is the duty of the Belgian hierarchy to keep the patrimony of the church intact and to oppose every act or attempt contrary thereto. Catholic liturgy does not merely look upon bells as objects pertaining to worship; it has included them in the category of sacred vessels. They are consecrated to divine worship through being anointed by the bishop and by the prayers of the Church. They must be retained for their exclusively religious purposes and only used for sounding the praises of God and summoning the faithful to prayer. They cannot be alienated without the consent of the ecclesiastical authorities. Their removal, their being utilized for profane purposes, would be looked upon by our people as a sacrilege. Moreover, how painful would it be for the faithful to think that the metal from which the bells are cast and which is as a rule provided by their generosity, might be converted into guns or ammunition for the use of a hostile army and might be destined to carry death into the ranks of their own countrymen, their own children.

We shall be happy to receive from your Excellency a

word to calm our fears and to enable us to pacify our sorely tried people.

Accept the assurance of our sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

(Signed) M. H. Rutten,
Bishop of Namur.

(Signed) Th. Louis Heylen,
Bishop of Liége.

The Governor General gave an evasive answer.

Government General of Belgium, Brussels,
September 29th, 1917.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

In the letter you wrote me on the 10th inst., your Eminence, in conjunction with their Lordships, the Bishops of Namur and Liége, expresses fears lest the bells in Belgian churches be seized. The hierarchy contemplates a case in which military necessities might lead to the execution of such measures.

I am able to answer that so far there has been no reason for assuming any definite attitude as regards the question raised in this appeal.

I offer to your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) Von Falkenhausen,
Lieutenant General.

The Cardinal acknowledged the receipt of the Governor General's letter as follows:

Archbishop's House, Malines,
October 4th, 1917.

To His Excellency Baron von Falkenhausen, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your Excellency's letter of the 29th inst., with reference to the preservation of bells consecrated to Catholic worship,

and I thank you in the names of my colleagues, the Bishops of Namur and Liége, and in my own, for having quieted our anxiety in this matter.

Please accept our assurance of our sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

Events were soon to show that the fears of the Belgian people as to the seizure of their church bells were not ill-founded. Early in February, 1918, Baron von Falkenhausen informed the Cardinal that he was ordering inventory to be made of all existing bronze bells and all zinc organ pipes in Belgium. This was the prelude to the definite act of seizure.

Government General of Belgium, Brussels,
February 8th, 1918.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

I have the honor to inform your Eminence that I shall at an early date issue an order providing for a general inventory of all bronze bells, etc., and all zinc organ pipes throughout Belgium.

In view of my letter of September 24th, 1917, I did not wish to fail giving you this information.

I offer your Eminence the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) Von Falkenhausen,
Lieutenant General.

In the face of this decision the Cardinal, considering all negotiations with the Governor General fruitless, wrote directly to the Chancellor of the empire, Count von Hertling, in these terms:

Archbishop's House, Malines,
February 14th, 1918.

Mr. Chancellor—The Governor General of Brussels, Baron von Falkenhausen, has informed me in a letter dated

February 8th that he will very shortly proceed to seize the bells and organ pipes in our churches.

In September, 1917, it was already being noised abroad that our bells were in danger. We tried then to pacify the minds of our flock by inviting an assurance from the Governor General that in accordance with the oft-repeated promises of his predecessors he would uphold the rights of the church in Belgium, the Bishops of Namur and Liége joining their signatures to mine. The answer of the Governor General, dated September 29th, was evasive. That of February 8th now announces that we must no longer cherish any illusions under this head, and that failing the august protection of his Imperial Majesty the sacrilege will be perpetrated in the course of a few days.

Our only remaining hope, Excellency, is in your gracious intervention.

Article 46, of The Hague convention, imposes upon the occupying power the duty of respecting both the exercise of public worship and private property, whether held individually or collectively. Again Article 53 limits all requisitions in kind to the needs of the army of occupation.

It is superfluous to add that bells and organ pipes are not used to meet the needs of the army of occupation. They come under the head of private property and are used in the exercise of Catholic worship.

In the name of international law, subscribed to by the highest authorities of the German Empire and the Kingdom of Prussia, I beg your Excellency to prevent the publication of the order with which Belgium is threatened. Being a Catholic, like ourselves, your Excellency cannot be unaware that the forcible seizure of a church bell is a sacrilege. A bell is a consecrated object, which means that it is irrevocably dedicated to the service of God. The bishop has not merely blessed it, he has anointed it with holy oil and sacred chrism in order that, according to the language of the liturgy, it may be sanctified by the Holy Ghost ("sanctificetur a spiritu sancto") and the faithful recognize in its call the voice of the Church summoning her children to hasten to her bosom ("Vasculum ad invitandos filios sanctae

ecclesiae praeparatum, ut festina antes ad piae matris ecclesiae gremium cantent in ecclesia sanctorum canticum novum").

The voice of the bell summoning you to lead the life of a Christian and which will summon you again to the tribunal of God, your Excellency recognizes, reveres and regards with affection. Now that you are Chancellor of the Empire, its appeal still reaches your heart just as it did when you were yet a simple member of the faithful. The realities of the spiritual life and ecclesiastical law are unchanged by human greatness. You can neither order nor authorize the ordering of the profanation of bells consecrated to Catholic worship without at the same time participating in a sacrilege.

Let me add, Excellency, that this encroachment on the rights of the Church announced by the Governor General of Brussels would come as a great shock to a people who have never wished Germany anything but good—a people Germany has bound herself by oath to take under her protection and who should by now be spared fresh sorrows.

Among the cherished hopes of your compatriots is assuredly that of one day renewing friendly relations with our country. The remembrance of a violation of religious rights so very dear to each diocese, parish and every Christian family in our country, would linger in the minds of our people for several generations, fostering hatred instead of love. Will not your Excellency therefore come to the conclusion that the economic future of Germany is inevitably bound up with the vindication of international law and the rights of conscience?

Our venerable colleagues in the German and Austrian episcopate do not deny the validity of these principles, but they have had to resign themselves to the removal of bells from their churches with feelings of despair in their souls. If perchance they were so blinded by patriotism as to tolerate an evil they were powerless to prevent, our patriotism on the contrary only gives additional force to the law of resistance. We should, indeed, be traitors to our church and our country were we to be guilty of the cowardice of supplying the enemy with material for engines of destruc-

tion destined only to bring death into the ranks of the heroes who are sacrificing their lives for us.

I make this my appeal to the man whose noble career has been devoted to the service of right, to a Christian who has always considered it an honor to champion the rights of the Church and of the consciences of Catholics.

In conclusion I beg the Chancellor of the Empire to receive the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

The Holy See on its own account also made pressing appeals to the Imperial Government to prevent the impending confiscation.

It was owing to these various representations that the threat of the Governor General remained a dead letter and the bells in the Belgian churches were saved.

CHAPTER XLVI

THE CARDINAL PROVES THAT THE SCARCITY OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS IN OCCUPIED BELGIUM IS DUE SOLELY TO THE ACTION OF THE GERMAN "CENTRALS"—HE DENOUNCES CERTAIN SERIOUS OUTRAGES COMMITTED BY GERMAN SOLDIERS IN CHURCHES AND COMPLAINS OF THE SUPPORT GIVEN BY THE GERMAN AUTHORITIES TO A CAMPAIGN DIRECTED AGAINST HIMSELF BY THE "ACTIVISTS"

EARLY in the winter of 1917-1918, though the output of the Belgian coal mines had not sensibly lessened, coal was almost unobtainable. The occupying power limited more and more the coal ration of the people.

Acting on the instructions of the Governor General, Baron von der Lancken informed the Cardinal that it was needful to practice the greatest economy in the consumption of coal. This letter was a reproduction, more or less, of one he had already written on the same subject in February, 1917.

His Eminence replied directly to the Governor General, proving by figures that if the scarcity of coal were great the blame must be solely attributed to the German requisitions. In general the scarcity and consequently the prevailing high prices of agricultural products were due to the sinister action of the "Centrals." These organizations, created by the occupying power ostensibly to regulate the equable distribution of produce among the inhabitants, had for their main purpose the filching of the greater part of it for the benefit of Germany.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
November 24th, 1917.

To His Excellency Baron von Falkenhausen, Governor General, Brussels.

The letter with which your Excellency has favored me through the obliging medium of Baron von der Lancken informs me that the quantity of coal allotted by your government for distribution among the Belgian people consistently grows less and less, so that not only private houses but also schools and churches will have to suffer from the general scarcity. I do not complain of the extension of the same treatment to all alike, but I fail to understand how this regime of famine comes to be imposed upon us. Belgium is a rich country, and yet our people are impoverished to the point of being hungry and cold.

Normally, agriculture, industry and the working of the mines are carried on with a marvelous intensity and behold, after three years of occupation the factories are closed down and we are told that the available agricultural products will not suffice for our most pressing needs.

Official statistics which I have by me prove that the coal-producing industry yielded in 1910 twenty-four million tons and in each of the four following years twenty-three million tons. If we deduct from these figures the quantity consumed in the collieries, this leaves an annual average of twenty-one million tons available for sale and distribution. Taking the Belgian population at a rough estimate of six million, each inhabitant ought to be allotted more than three tons, i. e., 3,000 kils. of coal per annum.

I am not unaware that at the present time coal miners are less numerous and their work less productive, but who is to be held responsible for the reduction of hands and energy?

Agricultural products are almost unobtainable and are sold at exorbitant prices. One simple instance of this will suffice: Potatoes have been sold at from 2f 50 to 3f a kilo (roughly from 48c. to 58c. per pound). Our land yields sufficient quantity to supply each inhabitant with about one and one-third pounds per day, even after deducting the

amount necessary for feeding cattle and for use in certain industries, but the Brussels people actually received from September, 1916, to September, 1917, approximately two ounces of potatoes per head per day!

Therefore, in the name of our starving people, dismayed by the outlook for the winter, I beg your Excellency to call to mind the promises made by your predecessors and realize your own responsibilities in this matter.

Hardly had he arrived in Brussels when the Governor General Baron von der Goltz proclaimed that Belgian citizens desirous of peaceably following their occupation had nothing to fear from the troops or the German authorities and invited our countrymen to resume their commercial activities, to reopen the factories and to gather in the harvest.

Under date April 22d, of last year, the late Baron von Bissing made the following communication to the Belgian public:

"With a view of insuring the victualing of the people I have determined henceforth to prohibit in the territory under my authority the exportation of all foodstuffs. All these products, provided they be Belgian, will therefore be reserved for the population of the territory dependent on my administration"!

Every time, either in the beginning or in the course of the occupation, the fulfilling of our pastoral duty has compelled us to draw a line of demarcation between our permanent duty of loyalty to the legitimate government on the one hand and the acceptance of the temporary regulations issued by the occupier on the other, the representatives of your government have appealed for their own advantage to Article 43 of The Hague convention. This article, it is well to remember, is conceived in these terms:

"Article 43. The authority of the legal power, having 'de facto' passed into the hands of the occupier, the latter shall do everything in his power to re-establish and insure, as far as can be, public order and public life by respecting, unless absolutely prevented, the laws in force in the country."

The reason why international law recognizes in the occupier a power "de facto" is therefore quite definite, "to re-

establish and insure, as far as can be, public order and public life." The limits of the exercise of it are defined, "To respect, unless absolutely prevented, the laws in force in the country."

Whoever holds the power, therefore, will find in this Article 43 both the basis and the limit of his responsibilities. Moreover, Article 43 clearly defines the obligatory destination of the resources of the country. The occupier may not seize or claim them except for "the wants of the army of occupation."

These two articles give the key to the solution of the knotty problem of providing the country with foodstuffs and fuel.

Our own painful experience shows that the German administration has erred in intrusting to the "Centrals" the exclusive control of the supplies of potatoes, coal, sugar, cereals, fats, etc.

Means of subsistence and heating are not lacking, yet the people are badly fed and the means of heating very poor. Where does everything not intended for their consumption go? In the name of public order and public life, which your government pledged itself to maintain when it took the power in hand, in the name of a people suffering hunger and cold, we implore the General Government to resolutely abolish the "Centrals" whose procedure is so fatal to Belgian interests and to confide the control of supplies for our country either to permanent deputations agreeably to the Belgian laws of August 4th, 1914, or to the national committee under the supervision of ministers who will protect Belgian interests.

This letter is addressed to the Governor General with feelings of deference and hope. No doubt what I ask him for is no favor, but when the interest of workers' families and small householders is at stake, it does not cost a pastor very dear to join to his lawful claims an earnest prayer. Besides, is not your Excellency bound to admit that in doing us justice you are falling in with the wishes of your own countrymen? If the latter, as we firmly believe, have not given up all hopes of one day renewing commercial rela-

tions with Belgium, is it not natural that they should ask you not to sow fresh seeds of discord and bitterness, but rather leave behind you some last remembrance which will speak of justice?

Please accept the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

The Governor General, instead of answering the Cardinal's arguments, found it easier to assert, just as he had done before, in the matter of the protest against the arrest of officials, that he declined to discuss with his Eminence questions which had no direct bearing on ecclesiastical affairs.

The Cardinal justified himself by affirming that his duty made it imperative for him to take a practical interest in both the physical and moral sufferings of his flock. Since the Governor General wished to confine himself to strictly ecclesiastical matters in his relations with the Cardinal, the latter denounces some serious breaches of respect due to religion committed in sundry places by German troops. He also complained of the support given by the occupying power to the campaign of calumny leveled against him by the "activists." The latter publicly proclaimed that if Flemish prisoners in Germany had no priests at their disposal speaking their language, the blame must be laid on the Cardinal's shoulders. As a matter of fact, the latter had, since December, 1914, appealed to the German Government for permission to send priests speaking both the national languages to internment camps in Germany.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
December 11th, 1917.

To His Excellency Baron von Falkenhausen, Governor General, Brussels.

Your Excellency—In your esteemed letter dated November 29th you express the view that the subject of my letter of 23rd ult. did not concern what you call ecclesiastical affairs and is therefore outside my province.

The Governor General would find neither in Germany nor elsewhere any Catholic bishop who would consent to limit his sphere of action to the precincts of the church or to the purely spiritual wants of his flock. The physical and moral sufferings of our people are ours also, and any bishop failing to share in them would betray his sacred trust. Moreover, I am a Belgian citizen and I owe it to my country to make fitting use of whatever influence I possess on her behalf. Should I have noised abroad my grievances? Or submitted them directly to the first authority in the Empire? But when I laid them before the Governor General, was that not paying homage to the high position he holds midway between his Imperial Majesty and occupied Belgium?

However that may be, your Excellency cannot dispute the religious character of the two following incidents, the first of which took place at Hainault within the war zone, while the second concerns myself personally.

On November 14th last at Tournay, Mons, and in a number of important communes in Hainault, German soldiers, either themselves or through the instrumentality of others, opened certain tabernacles where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved in our churches and chapels, while in some places, I am told, they even dared to lay hands on the sacred ciborium inclosed in the tabernacle. These facts are vouched for by persons whom I believe to be sincere and well-informed. I earnestly beg your Excellency to investigate these matters and take the necessary steps to prevent a repetition of such sacrileges.

To come to the second of my complaints. For some five months now the activist newspapers have been organizing a campaign of calumny and outrage against myself. Personally I treat it with contempt. But there is one thing I must set my face against, because by dint of repetition it might lead simple-minded folk to misconstrue the sentiments with which I am inspired in the carrying out of my pastoral duties. These newspapers make me answerable for the lack of bi-lingual Belgian confessors in both the military and civil internment camps and in those where the deported

are lodged. As a matter of fact, your officials know quite well that I have made repeated representations directly and indirectly, both to your predecessors and yourself, to put an end to this deplorable state of affairs, but in vain.

The action of the slanderers is all the more cowardly because they know that the connivance of your government insures impunity for them and deprives us of the means of defense. The most bare-faced among them, who signs himself Dr. Aug. Borms, is a favorite of your administration and of the Politische Abteilung. The latest edition of his calumny is dated November 29th. Can you not realize that respect for truth and religion imposes duties upon you?

Receive the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

The Governor General was unwilling to answer the Cardinal's letter of November 24th on the pretext that he would not discuss with him anything except religious matters. It was Baron von der Lancken who took upon himself to plead the cause of the "Centrals" and to justify the manner in which foodstuffs and particularly agricultural products were being distributed by the occupying power.

The cause was a bad one; consequently the pleading was weak.

Political Department of the Government General, Brussels, December 1st, 1917.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

The Governor General has forwarded me your letter of November 24th for reply.

I cannot refrain from refuting certain insinuations it contains and calling your Eminence's attention to some points which escaped your notice when ventilating your grievances and making known your wishes.

Your Eminence regrets that agricultural produce is hardly obtainable and only at exorbitant prices. On this occasion you are right in recalling the promises made by the late Baron von Bissing to the representatives of neutral

countries and the Belgian people, to forbid the exportation of foodstuffs, with certain exceptions provided for in the contracts. It could not have escaped your notice that this promise made by the Governor General limiting his right to commandeer these goods for the needs of the army of occupation was a purely voluntary act on his part in favor of the Belgians, for you must remember that this right of seizure is in conformity with Article 53 of The Hague convention, as you yourself acknowledge.

This engagement, to which he consented of his own free will, the Governor General has always observed in its entirety. This, I am glad to see, your Eminence does not call into question in your letter. You ask where the foodstuffs destined for the Belgian people ultimately go. I would remind you that the Governor General in numerous notices to the people has shown that great quantities of foodstuffs were acquired by the wealthy to the detriment of the bulk of the people. It is the rich who are unpatriotic enough to pay middlemen exorbitant prices, such as are mentioned in your Eminence's letter. Small farmers and holders of monopolies enrich themselves by fraudulently disposing of foodstuffs which the Governor General in his solicitude endeavors to put on the market at reasonable prices for sale to the less fortunate and needy classes. Numerous orders and decrees of all kinds, and quite lately the new order in virtue of which more severe penalties than ever are to be inflicted on profiteers, are so many proofs of the fight which the "Centrals" and other organizations erected by the Governor General are carrying on against a fraction of the population for the benefit of the masses. Your Eminence yourself, in your pastoral letter of last spring, showed that the wretched state of things now obtained must be laid at the door of the profiteers. You made a solemn appeal to the consciences of peasants who have proved to be unpatriotic. At the time of these declarations people complained to the German authorities that the clergy had not exercised its weighty influence to remedy the sad plight in which the Belgian people finds itself. In spite of all this you throw all the responsibility on the "Centrals" and ignore the untiring

efforts of the Governor General and his officials to insure the just and equitable distribution of all agricultural produce. Of course they do not always succeed in overcoming the resistance made by certain sections of the population at the instigation of vested interests. The same phenomena are to be found in all countries involved in the war. Nowhere have the organizations created to meet new situations succeeded in finding definite solutions to the grave problems arising out of the war in every country nor for the changes in economic conditions which are its inevitable consequence.

As regards the difficulties in the coal supply, the question is primarily one of transport. Belgium, so far as this goes, finds herself in precisely the same plight as other countries.

Your Eminence reminds me that the occupier has the right to maintain public order and life. The numerous orders of the Governor General, whose purpose it is to insure the feeding of the Belgian people, and the unceasing efforts of the officials placed under him, the penalties ever increasing in severity against profiteering in foodstuffs and against all who disobey the Governor General's orders, are an eloquent proof of the slender foundation on which your accusations rest. If results do not always justify our expectations, the chief blame must be sought for—I am compelled to admit—in the want of co-operation on the part of the competent Belgian authorities and in the absence of public spirit among the Belgian people.

Nevertheless these authorities and the population of Belgium are the principal objects of the Governor General's benevolent intentions.

I offer to your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) LANCKEN.

The Cardinal in a letter addressed to Baron von der Lancken and in which he complains of several vexatious measures taken by the occupying power again accuses the "Centrals" of being the primary cause of the acute distress in which the population was plunged.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
December 11th, 1917.

To Baron von der Lancken, Chief of the Political Department of the Government General, Brussels.

Dear Baron—I am glad to accept your kind offer to transmit a sealed letter to the head Catholic chaplain, Mgr. Joppen.*

It is true, then, that in spite of all the promises made to His Holiness and to us, the Dean Jules Herman will not recover his liberty. The case is one of the numerous applications of a process inadmissible in justice. When the tribunal sentences a prisoner to a definite penalty and the penalty is paid, the prisoner has a right to his liberty. But now, without a new trial, by an arbitrary decision he is kept in exile. Among the numerous victims of this procedure I may mention the mayor of Malines, M. Charles Dessain; the dean of Orp-le-grand, M. Herman, and my secretary, Canon Loncin.

I know that people are trying to be disagreeable to me, but is this a reason for condoning an injustice?

The same ungracious intention toward myself again manifests itself in the letter written in the name of the Government General to his Excellency the Nuncio, regarding the closing of the Ursuline Convent at Malines. This letter speaks of the "spirit of rebellion" against the laws of the country, of "breaches, which being committed at Malines itself . . ."

This is erroneously identifying with a "rebellion" a passive resistance dictated by motives of conscience, and with the "laws of the country" measures fabricated for no other purpose than to overturn them.

Furthermore, supposing the training colleges had broken the laws of the country, it does not follow that it was permissible to shut the Catholic secondary school and the Catholic primary school, which, though under the same roof as the training college, had nothing in common with it. The

* In answering a letter of the Cardinal wherein he interceded on behalf of a political prisoner, Baron von der Lancken offered to forward a sealed letter to Monsignor Joppen and announced that Abbe Herman had not obtained leave to return to Belgium.

closing of these two schools is a severe blow to the freedom of education. I still hope that the line of action taken against these innocent nuns will not be continued with.*

As regards the "Centrals," it is not possible for you not to feel the weakness of your pleading.

No doubt I have reminded small farmers of the obligations, charity and common fairness imposed upon them because I hold that we must tell the truth even to our friends, but you will notice that I immediately subjoined: "I am fully aware that the primary responsibility for the crisis does not rest with the small farmers." In a document intended for public reading in the churches, I could not be more precise than this, but you are too circumspect not to see that I did not even mention the word "Central." Do not place any additional burden on the shoulders of the small farmers. You have already weighed down and drained them by the fines you have inflicted. "The Central" is but an octopus whose spreading tentacles unceasingly absorb the vital resources of the country. Leave the permanent deputations and the national committee to preside over the distribution of food and coal and then the people will be nourished and warmed and you will no longer incur the reproach of having favored Germany and engaged in commerce with the neutral countries to our detriment.

Please receive the assurance of our sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

Baron von der Lancken, in replying to the foregoing letter, endeavors, in accordance with the Governor General's instructions, to refute the accusations brought against the occupying power by the Cardinal in his letter of December 10th to Baron von Falkenhausen.

* The authorities of the free (Catholic) training college, under the direction of the Ursulines, in their unwillingness to recognize the administrative separation imposed by the occupying power, refused, as the majority of establishments had done, to present their pupils before an examination board on which members from the new offices sat. On account of this refusal, the government ordered the closure, not only of the training college, but also of the free secondary school and the primary school, which were carried on in the same buildings as the training college.

Political Department of the Government General,
Brussels, December 19th, 1917.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

The Governor General has handed me your Eminence's esteemed letter dated the 10th inst. and has asked me to reply to it. His Excellency declares that he is unable to recognize the right by which, as a Belgian citizen, your Eminence claims to use the influence you derive from the position you occupy in the Church. For your Eminence, invested, as you are, with very high ecclesiastical authority, holds a privileged position and enjoys a protection of which the Governor General and his predecessors out of regard for the Holy See have always held count. From the very beginning of the occupation your Eminence has made use of the privileges attached to your ecclesiastical position to foment a political agitation which in the case of a simple citizen would bring upon him prosecution by the courts. It is for this reason that the Governor General expressly adheres to his own point of view, viz., not to enter into correspondence with your Eminence except in questions of a purely religious nature. In his quality of representative of His Majesty the Emperor, the Governor General exacts the full recognition of his authority in the territory under occupation.

I now come to the particular points put forward by your Eminence. In the first place, I should like to remark that in regard to the perquisitions made in churches in the provinces of Hainault, an explanation has already been given by the inspector of military areas to his Lordship the Bishop of Tournay, and the affair can therefore be considered at an end. Nevertheless, I should like to point out that these perquisitions have shown the misuse to which churches have been put by concealing objects in every way profane in places reserved for divine worship only.

In regard to the complaints made by your Eminence against Doctor Borms, the Governor General thinks that the latter had good reasons for offering resistance to your Eminence when, in using your ecclesiastical influence, you

initiate a conflict with the legitimate aspirations of the Flemish people.

To sanction the sending of Belgian priests into prison camps in Germany—a question which for the second time your Eminence raised—rests exclusively with the military authorities in Germany, but I feel bound to remark that the same authorities, in refusing the candidates recommended by your Eminence, yield to a misgiving, which from their point of view is fully justified, for the political attitude which you have assumed from the very beginning of the war has not been such as to inspire them with sufficient confidence in your choice.

In your letter of December 11th you again bring forward your objections to the "Centrales." Referring to the statements I have already made, I should like to call your attention once more to this fact, that the difficulties of which you complain in regard to supplying the people in Belgium with food are to be found in every belligerent country, even in those where no organization of the kind exists. It appears to me that it is not fair to make the Belgian "Centrales" responsible for all the difficulties.

So far as the Cure Jules Herman is concerned, new arrangements have been made with which I recently made your Eminence acquainted. With regard to the closing of the schools at Malines, conducted by the Ursulines, I can only state to your Eminence that I am not competent to deal with the matter, but all the same I will procure fuller information and if needful will be ready to revert to this affair later on, in case it is ever reopened.

I present to your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) LANCKEN.

CHAPTER XLVII

THE CARDINAL REQUESTS BARON VON DER LANCKEN NOT TO CONVERT THE CHURCH OF ST. ROCH, AT HAL, INTO A HOSPITAL

Archbishop's House, Malines,
March 29th, 1918.

To Baron von der Lancken, Chief of the Political Department, Government General, Brussels.

Dear Baron—I must draw your kind attention to a rather delicate situation that has arisen at Hal, which, by an effort of good-will, could be settled without any unpleasantness.

The local authorities wish to convert a parish church, that of St. Roch, to be precise, into a hospital. To do so would entail the disorganization of divine worship in a parish of more than 3,000 souls, at a moment when the services are exceptionally numerous. The dean of Hal informs me that there are a certain number of unconsecrated buildings where the wounded could easily be lodged.

I hope you will be good enough to use your good offices for the furtherance of religious liberty, and in so doing you will earn my gratitude. I may add also that, according to information received, your intervention is urgently needed.

Please receive the expression of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

The Cardinal's request met with a favorable reception. The church remained available for religious purposes.

CHAPTER XLVIII

THE RELIGIOUS INTERESTS OF PRISONERS DETAINED IN THE CITADEL OF DIEST

EARLY in March, 1918, the military authorities brought back a large number of civilian prisoners from Germany, principally from the camp at Holtzminden, and interned them in Diest in a disused citadel. The Cardinal, hearing that the spiritual interests of these prisoners were neglected, requested the Governor General, using Baron von der Lancken as an intermediary, to authorize the parochial clergy of Diest to attend to their wants.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
March 29th, 1918.

To Baron von der Lancken, Chief of the Political Department of the Government General, Brussels.

Dear Baron—At the present moment there are about 400 civilians, transferred from Germany, lodged in a citadel situated in the small town of Diest, and rumor has it that their number will shortly be considerably increased. Some of them are prisoners, while others—and these are in the majority—have already expiated their offense, but, I am told, are being detained as "undesirable" under police surveillance. None of these men ever comes into contact with the priests. At the most they receive but rare and flying visits from the German chaplain. I earnestly request his Excellency the Governor General to kindly authorize the local clergy to provide regular religious services for those who are interned.

I trust you will use your influence to procure this authority. At the same time that I thank you in anticipation, I ask you to accept the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

The Governor General refused to grant the Cardinal's request, but Baron von der Lancken, in replying to the above letter, guaranteed that the spiritual welfare of the prisoners at Diest, which had hitherto not been overlooked, would be even better attended to in the future.

The Cardinal acknowledged the receipt of the letter of Baron von der Lancken and, while taking note of the assurance given by the Governor General, expressed his regret that his request had not been granted.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
April 2nd, 1918.

To Baron von der Lancken, Chief of the Political Department of the Government General, Brussels.

Dear Baron—I duly received yours of April 17th, 1918, in which you very kindly inform me as to the care of the religious interests of those interned in the citadel of Diest.

Though I very much regret that Belgian priests are denied access to their compatriots, especially to hear their confessions, I am grateful for the guarantees given in your esteemed letter. In thanking you I would ask you to receive the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

CHAPTER XLIX

THE COMMANDEERING OF MATTRESSES IN THE HOMES FOR THE AGED OF THE LITTLE SISTERS OF THE POOR— DIVINE SERVICE IN THE PRISON ATTACHED TO THE KOMMANDANTUR AT BRUSSELS

At the time when woolen goods were commandeered, the Cardinal was informed that aged persons lodged in the Homes of the Little Sisters of the Poor were threatened with the loss of their mattresses. He therefore requested Baron von der Lancken to intercede with the Governor General in favor of the unfortunate old people.

He also asked him to arrange to have mass celebrated in the Kommandantur prison at an earlier hour, so as not to prolong until a late hour in the morning the fast of the communicants.

After an inquiry which lasted three weeks the Governor General decided that 400 old men, out of 450 inmates of the Rue Haute at Brussels, should be robbed of their mattresses. As regards the hour of divine worship at the Kommandantur no change could be made, Baron von der Lancken informed the Cardinal.

The Cardinal in an energetic protest showed how outrageous were the decisions of the Governor General.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
June 27th, 1918.

To Baron von der Lancken, Chief of the Political Department of the Government General, Brussels.

Dear Baron—Your letter dated June 12th brings me a very disappointing answer to the two petitions made by me in the firm hope that this time, at all events, I should meet with no refusal; the refusal is, alas! unconditional.

Thus out of the 450 mattresses of these poor and infirm old men in the Home of the Rue Haute, his Excellency the Governor General has ordered 400 to be commandeered, and you tell me in his name that fifty mattresses for fifty of the more serious cases must suffice.

I am amazed at such language and must confess that discussion is quite beyond me. For months your agents have invaded, sometimes in one district, sometimes in another, the homes, hospitals, orphanages, and made the aged, the sick, the dying and orphan children sleep on straw, or on some indefinable substitute to which in any case those interested prefer straw. These facts go so far beyond the limits of what we Belgians would have believed possible that we look on them with amazement, scarcely believing the evidence of our own eyes.

The odiousness of these repeated requisitions takes our breath away.

But when the heartrending appeal of the Little Sisters of the Poor, in favor of the aged under their care, in Rue Haute at Brussels, came to my ears, I was under the impression, quite wrongly as I see now, that the distress of these saintly women and the fate that awaits their charges would evoke feelings of sympathy, but, alas, for the sad searing of conscience brought about by militarism!

You imagine also that it is possible for prisoners, weakened by the hardships they have undergone and the mental strain resulting from several months of confinement, to remain fasting until 9 a. m. or even later, when they go to communion on Sundays. The question naturally arises as to how the concession I have applied for can possibly be prejudicial to the discipline of the Kommandantur prison, especially as there are generally some priests among the prisoners who would only be too glad to say mass for them at an earlier hour—and yet you refuse to grant it!

Once more I am silent. You cut me short.

Furthermore you state, incidentally, that the spiritual needs of the prisoners are not very great. Now many of them on their release have told me that they suffered

greatly from a lack of the consolations of our holy religion.

But all are not heroes.

To overcome the repugnance certain patriotic souls naturally feel toward making their confession to a priest who is for them a constant reminder of an enemy power, to remain fasting until a late hour in the morning, when their whole organism is exhausted, both call for more than average virtue, and this is precisely the reason why I have for four whole years implored every successive and competent German authority to grant military and civilian prisoners adequate facilities for approaching the sacraments, both here and in Germany. But in spite of the loudest public professions of regard for the spiritual welfare of Catholic prisoners, I have met with an obstinate refusal right up to this day.

Please accept the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

CHAPTER L

THE BELGIAN BISHOPS FORMALLY PROTEST AGAINST THE IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT'S PROJECT TO UTILIZE CERTAIN CATHOLIC CHURCHES FOR PROTESTANT WORSHIP

Archbishop's House, Malines,
July 8th, 1918.

To Baron von Falkenhausen, Governor General, Brussels.

Excellency—We have learned that the Imperial Government in Belgium has conceived the project of using certain of our Catholic churches for Protestant worship.

Filled with consternation at the announcement of this danger, we deem it our episcopal duty to lose no time in doing our utmost to oppose unanimously the measure with which we are threatened and to declare that it is an encroachment on the sacred rights of the Church and wounding to the susceptibilities of our flock.

In virtue of their solemn consecration or blessing our churches are dedicated exclusively and forever to Catholic worship. To hand them over arbitrarily for another purpose is in the eyes of the Church tantamount to an odious, if not actually a sacrilegious, desecration, and so true is this that in certain cases provided for by canon law, a church thus desecrated has to be reconciled by expiatory rites before it can be restored to Catholic worship.

These joint churches have been and are still proscribed in numerous decrees emanating from the Roman congregations and condemned by theologians. So great is the number and such the harmony existing between these various decisions, that they constitute an acquired right in law. In countries where these joint Catholic and Protestant churches are in vogue the practice is merely tolerated by Rome, and the Holy See has explicitly declared that it cannot be intro-

duced elsewhere. The teaching of the Catholic faculties in the German universities is identical with what we have just laid down. Article 14 of the Belgian constitution also guarantees liberty of worship in public as well as privately. Is there any one bold enough to maintain that the measure they contemplate inflicting upon us is in no way prejudicial to Catholic worship?

The Hague conference expressly laid down in Article 46: "Religious convictions and the exercise of public worship must be respected."

This parading of a form of worship antagonistic to their own in their very sanctuaries would inflict a deep wound on the feelings of our faithful people, and it is precisely on the ground of scandal that the prohibition of the Roman congregations is based.

The Belgian people in general, whether in town or in the country, are staunch in their allegiance to the historical traditions of the Roman Church. The sight of unbelievers and Catholics worshiping in the same church would be inflicting an outrage upon sorely wounded consciences and a painful scandal to pious persons, in whose judgment this promiscuity will ever remain an uncalled for and odious desecration. Let us add that the projected scheme would only accentuate the discontent, hidden yet keenly felt, caused by the physical and moral sufferings the Belgian nation has gone through during four years and which weigh more and more heavily upon them as the days go by.

The General Government cannot even allege as a pretext the absence of secular buildings where the Evangelical services can be carried out with due decorum. We undertake to point out, in all the districts where the occupying power calls for one, a hall where religious service can be held without objection.

Whatever happens, we will not have recourse to resistance by force; our dignity forbids us; but we protest and we continue to protest against the violations of canon law, of Belgian constitutional law and of international law. We can never of our own free will connive at the régime of joint churches. If it be established, it will be so in spite of us.

May it please God to enlighten the Imperial Government on the bearing and disastrous consequences of the policy it contemplates adopting and make it refrain from proceeding further with it, thus sparing the Belgian people, the clergy and the faithful this fresh calamity.

We beg your Excellency to accept the expression of our sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines,

(Signed) T. L. Heylen,
Bishop of Namur,

(Signed) M. H. Rutten,
Bishop of Liége.

P. S.—We are unable to submit the text of this document to his Lordship the Bishop of Tournay, but we are in a position to vouch for his sharing our views and his associating himself with us in our protest.

CHAPTER LI

RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS AND OF THE DEPORTED

UNDER the ever-growing pressure of the allied troops the German army was in full retreat. The victorious Flanders offensive, launched on September 28th, had already freed a considerable part of occupied Belgium. The German General Government of Belgium knew that its days were numbered. On Thursday, October 17th, at 3 p. m. Baron von der Lancken repaired to the Archbishop's house and in the name of the Governor General and the Berlin Government handed the Cardinal the following declaration, translated into French:

"You are in our estimation the incarnation of occupied Belgium, of which you are the venerated and trusted pastor. For this reason it is to you the Governor General and my government also have commissioned me to come and to announce that when we evacuate your soil we wish to hand over to you unasked and of our own free will the political prisoners serving their time either in Belgium or in Germany, as well as those who have been deported. They will be free to return to their homes; the first batch will start on Monday, 21st inst. As this news is sure to rejoice your heart, I am happy to impart it to you; the more so as I have not been able to live for four years in the midst of the Belgians without esteeming them and appreciating their patriotism at its true value."

The next day the Cardinal sent Baron von der Lancken the following letter:

Archbishop's House, Malines,
October 18th, 1918.

To Baron von der Lancken, Chief of the Political Department of the Government General, Brussels.

Dear Baron—The announcement you were kind enough to make yesterday, in the name of the Governor General and the German Government, as to the early release of our political prisoners and our deported, has greatly rejoiced me and I return you my heartfelt thanks.

Next Sunday your message will be given to the public in all the parishes of the diocese. It will produce a soothing impression and will quicken hopes. When in the course of the week families see the absent ones returning to their homes they will feel rising in them generous desires of reconciliation and forgiveness.

I have the honor to join to my letter a copy of the communication to be made to my flock.

I feel sure I am voicing the wishes of our people, when, in their name as well as in my own, I beg you to tell the authorities, whose representative you are among us, how greatly we appreciate the benevolent action of which your government's initiative is a proof and with what earnestness we long for the realization of the hopes your promise has raised in our hearts.

Accept, Baron, the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

With this letter was inclosed the Cardinal's communication to his flock, which was read in all the churches on Sunday, October 20th.

Malines, October 17th, 1918.

To the Clergy and Faithful of the Diocese of Malines.

Dear Beloved Brethren—Our hearts soar in hope.

Peace is not yet signed. So suddenly do events follow one another, so disconcertingly at times, that no one would venture to say peace was already won.

Its day, however, has already dawned.

We already see the harbinger of it.

Today, Thursday, October 17th, the chief of the political department came in the name of the Governor General of Brussels and of the Berlin Government. He brought word to me that Belgian political prisoners, interned either in Belgium or in Germany, and the Belgians deported into Germany will be released as soon as Belgium is evacuated. The release of those detained in the prisons of occupied Belgium, outside the military areas, will begin from Monday, 21st inst.

I append herewith the written declaration which the German Government's delegate handed to me. Influenced by a personal feeling, which you will understand, I have hesitated to give you the full text thereof. But on reflection, I have decided to do so.

(Here follows the text of the declaration above.)

You see then, dearly beloved brethren, that God is still with us. Your earnest appeals to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to Our Lady of the Rosary, Mary our Mediatrix, have been heard. Persevere of one mind in your prayers.

Remain calm and dignified.

The hour of definite deliverance and of peace with victory is at hand.

Courage and confidence!

Sacred Heart of Jesus, I put my trust in Thee.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, protect Belgium.

Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, Mary our Mediatrix, pray for us.

(Signed) D. J. Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Malines.

CHAPTER LII

PROTEST OF THE CARDINAL AGAINST THE BEHAVIOR OF GERMAN TROOPS DURING THEIR RETREAT

Archbishop's House, Malines,
October 18th, 1918.

To Baron von der Lancken, Chief of the Political Department of the Government General, Brussels.

Dear Baron—I am credibly informed that about October 14th and 15th more than 500 young men of St. Nicholas were led by force to the front, in the direction of Ypres. If, as I have reason to believe, this proves correct, you must admit that it is to be deplored and is, more than ever, unfortunate.

May we hope that the Vilvorde and Malines prisons will be opened at the beginning of next week, those of Brussels and Antwerp soon afterward?

Accept, dear Baron, the expression of my high esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
October 28th, 1918.

To Baron von der Lancken, Chief of the Political Department of the Government General, Brussels.

Dear Baron—The communal authorities at Malines are very much perturbed at the way in which the military make free use of the residences of private people. They are not content with requisitioning available rooms, but they expel, in a cavalier manner, the landlords from their homes and supplant them. Ladies, lawyers, doctors have thus been evicted from their houses.

And yet places of amusement, concert halls and theaters,

which would be admirably adapted for the installation of officers, are left open. The occupation of those places would, moreover, have a salutary moral effect.

I know that the jurisdiction of His Excellency the Governor General does not extend to the war zone, but I thought that his great influence might indirectly be used, and with success, in the interest of Malines families and of public order.

I avail myself of this opportunity to thank you for the release already granted to prisoners and also ask you to kindly stimulate the zeal of the officials commissioned to carry out the work of release. I know that numerous prisoners, among whom is a considerable contingent of priests and religious, who could render invaluable services to the diocese, are anxiously awaiting the release promised them through the clemency of the Governor General.

Accept, Baron, the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

Political Department of the Government General,
Brussels, November 1st, 1918.

To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.

I have the honor to acknowledge your esteemed letter of October 28th. I at once sent it to the competent military authorities, and believe myself already justified in saying that your Eminence's wishes will be met, so far as circumstances will allow.

I offer to your Eminence the assurance of my sincere esteem.

(Signed) LANCKEN.

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